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"NATURE still affords her bounty, but the generous use of it languishes in the very sight of supply. This is primarily because the rulers of the exchange of mankind's goods have failed through their own stubbornness and their own incompetence . . . Recognition of the falsity of material wealth as a standard of success . . . Our greatest primary task is to put the people to work . . . There must be strict supervision of all banks and credit investments. There must be an end to speculation with other people's money . . our interdependence on each other . . ." What is all this? The clap-trap of an international Socialist orating in Hyde Park? No, the solemn inaugural address of the President of the United States, speaking under the influence of a bank crisis. Nothing about "economy" or "tightening our belts" in face of the menace of cheapness and plenty, but the plain recognition of the need for a different basis of society. The question remains what the President will actually do with the dictatorial powers which he is, quite rightly, proposing to take.

Hitler's Victory

Herr Hitler has won a victory at the polls, but it was not the resounding triumph that he wanted, and he is still faced, as our Berlin correspondent points out on another page of this issue, with a solid and formidable opposition and with exceedingly difficult friends at his side. What he will do to consolidate himself remains to be seen. There is no doubt that the harrying of "Marxists" and Jews and the general stifling of liberties (including those of foreign newspaper correspondents) will continue, though it is possible that the Nationalists, if they stay in the coalition, may exercise some moderating influence. It is possible, too, that Hitler may find it convenient to conciliate the Catholic Centre, and that would involve some mitigation of the Nazi fury. But of any constructive policy, of any remedy for the economic discontents of the country, the Nazis appear to be entirely innocent. It is by that that in the last analysis their dictatorship, like any other, must stand or fall. Changes of flags and the suppression of nudism and jazz are no more effective than orations and revolvers as a cure for unemployment.

Germany and Europe

And what is to be hoped or feared abroad from the new regime? It is not easy to prophesy; but certain assumptions may safely be made. A Fascist Germany will come more definitely into the orbit of Italy. It will make against that rapprochement with France which Stresemann and Briand were working for, and which, with the moving to the Left of French opinion, was beginning to look like practical politics. It may, if Prussia and Bavaria come to loggerheads, break up its own unity. It will encourage a similar reaction in Austria; it has, indeed, already stirred the Austrian Nazis to a sinister

activity. What designs Hitler may have on the Danzig Corridor we do not know; but the Poles are alarmed and vigilant. Soviet Russia, which not long ago was counted as the friend of Germany and the enemy of Poland, has now got a treaty of non-aggression with Warsaw and is publicly blackguarded by Hitler in Berlin. The new alignment of forces in Europe is not, indeed, Hitler's work—it has been developing steadily for some time past. But it is patently affected by him, made sharper and more dangerous. The Continent is now a cluster of armed camps, none wanting war and all fearing war. A Nazi Germany may no more want war than does anyone else; but it will inevitably add to the fear of it.

Japan Goes On and On

The Japanese armies have swept the province of Jehol as we expected they would, and even more rapidly than we expected. A considerable Chinese force under Marshal Chang Hsueh-liang seems to have rallied to the defence of the Kupeikou Pass, which commands the road to Peking; but it could not stand for long against the Japanese artillery and aeroplanes. And what next? There will be little difficulty in finding a pretext for continuing the advance southward. There is profound anxiety in Peking and Tientsin, and it is shared by all who realise the aims of Japanese policy and the consequences of this adventure. The Manchurian conflict will not end at the Great Wall. There is every prospect of a bitter and long war, and there is the gravest danger of others besides Japan and China being involved in it. The Japanese victories in Jehol make it not less, but more, urgent to stop this fight. It is sheer lunacy for the League Powers and America to sit idly watching the spread of a fire that promises to set the world in flames. Soviet Russia has announced that she will not join in any action, but the rest of us are still strong enough to put the necessary pressure on Japan. The pressure must be concerted and it must be bold and comprehensive, isolated gestures like Sir John Simon's arms embargo are manifestly useless. This is not asking for war with Japan, as some would have us believe. It is the surest means of abating Japan's warlike policy.

Dying Hopes of Disarmament

The Disarmament Conference is now at its last gasp, and nobody, not even he himself, believes that Mr. MacDonald's eleventh hour dash to Switzerland will succeed in saving it. Long months of wrangling have put plan after plan into pigeon-holes, and hope after hope into limbo, and to-day the fighting in the Far East, the triumph of Hitlerism in Germany, and the seething of the cauldron in Central Europe, make the proceedings at Geneva look like a solemn farce. A resolution was carried in the Political Committee on Tuesday in favour of the French scheme of a continental pact of mutual assistance. It was carried by a majority of 14 to 5; but among the minority were Italy and Germany, as well as Holland, who objected to the exclusion of Great Britain from the pact. (That exclusion was, of course, at the insistence of the British delegate.) The resolution, therefore, obviously has no practical significance. As regards agreement about any kind of reduction of armaments, there is no sign of it, nor is there likely to be any with the Germans in their present mood of defiance. It has been suggested that Mr. MacDonald might propose a "Five Years' Truce" at the existing level of armaments. But Germany would assuredly veto that. Alternatively, it is said, we might have a convention embodying the "results so far achieved." So we might, indeed. But they would all go on the back of a postage stamp.

A One-day Dictatorship

Greece, from time immemorial, has been prolific in revolutions. This week she has had one of the shortest and most amusing on record. A general election took place on Sunday, and on Monday General Plastiras (the same man who in 1922 was responsible for the overthrow of the monarchy) proclaimed a military dictatorship. He alleged that parliamentary democracy in Greece was a hopeless failure, and declared that he himself assumed power "with a profound faith in God and in the strength of our race—strong in the support of the people and with the full backing of the armed forces of the nation." In fact his action was prompted by fears, which apparently his friend M. Venizelos shared, of a monarchical restoration. On Tuesday morning another officer, General Condylis, wired to Athens to say that he was coming at the head of an army corps to turn out the upstart. But this happily was unnecessary, as the political leaders had already agreed on the formation of a new Cabinet, with still another general as Premier, and the "one-day dictator" had promptly thrown in his hand. Everything seems to have been arranged in a very friendly way, and General Plastiras and his friends apparently are to suffer no penalty for their little indiscretion. The new Cabinet under General Othonaios is itself a sort of dictatorship, but it will only hold office temporarily, while M. Tsaldaris, whose party got a small majority at the polls, forms his own Government.

Academic Freedom in Italy

The Italian Ministry for Education is expected shortly to issue a circular laying down that no University lecturers shall be appointed or even have their appointments renewed unless they are members of the Fascist Party. A similar ruling is to be applied to the appointment of full professors. Hitherto a tacit acceptance of Fascismo has been thought sufficient: if the proposed decree is applied active participation—which means obeying party orders, wearing a black shirt on special occasions, and engaging in party propaganda—will be an official duty. The effect on scholarship, not to mention honesty, must be disastrous. There is still a chance that Mussolini, who is not without common sense, may realise that such decrees cause scepticism among foreigners when they see the chorus in the Italian press claiming a huge and spontaneous increase in Fascist Party membership.

The Meerut Judgment

Now that the text of the judgment in the Meerut Communist Conspiracy Case is available in this country, we discover it to be a portentous document of over 600 pages. It does little to dispel the idea that a grave injustice has been perpetrated. Amongst numerous objections the fundamental weakness of the case lies in the nature of the offence for which these unfortunate accused have received such heavy sentences. They are reputed to have "taken part in a conspiracy to deprive the King Emperor of his

sovereignty of British India." Now it is clear that since the Lahore resolution of 1929 demanding complete independence, the whole of the Congress Party has been engaged in a similar enterprise, and at least one Indian judge has given his opinion that it would be possible to indict Indian Liberals under such a charge. The only possible justification for the special procedure of a conspiracy case, or for the savagery of the punishment inflicted, would have been that a serious attempt had been made to upset the Government by force. Of this there is not a trace. The Government of India finally destroyed its only case, that of necessity, by abandoning on the score of economy another conspiracy case in which the alleged object was to form a terrorist organisation, whereas the unfortunate youths who were sentenced at Meerut deliberately ruled out the use of physical force.

The Control of Foodstuffs

Major Elliot's new Agricultural Marketing Bill is a comprehensive measure giving the Government very wide powers to control the importation of all kinds of foodstuffs into Great Britain. It is intended to be worked in connection with marketing schemes, under the Act passed by the Labour Government, for the control of the sale and distribution of home agricultural produce; but the power extends not only to cases in which marketing schemes are already in being, but also to those in which control of imports may be regarded as a step towards the regulation of the domestic supply. Subject only to the condition that existing treaties must not be infringed, there is no limit set to this power to control imports, or to the forms which the control may take. Non-tariff protection, often advocated as an alternative to import duties, is thus now to come in as the complement of the tariff introduced during the past eighteen months, and it will no longer be necessary to legislate separately for each commodity, or to trust to voluntary agreements with the food exporting interests abroad for the restriction of imports. Evidently the power thus assumed is capable of being used well or ill—well, only if it is confined to giving help to those forms of agriculture which show real promise of producing on economic terms if their marketing is efficiently organised.

The Premier and the Co-ops

The Co-operative movement is mustering its forces for the defence against the proposal to impose additional taxation upon it. A Special Co-operative Congress is to be held; and the effect will undoubtedly be to drive Co-operation into stronger hostility to the Government if the proposals of the recent report are carried into effect. It had been generally supposed that the Prime Minister had given at Seaham a definite promise that the Co-operative movement would not be further taxed while he remained in office. But it is now stated, on Mr. MacDonald's behalf, that the pledge which he gave referred only to taxation of Co-operative "dividends," and not to taxation in general. As the Committee does not propose to tax the "divi," this is held to keep its proposals within the terms of the Prime Minister's pledge. That, however, is certainly not the sense in which the pledge was understood; nor is it easy to see how, if sums paid out in "divi" are not profits, sums which could be so paid out, but are reserved in the business for development, or applied to social and educational services, can possibly be taxable as profits. To tax the movement on its trade with non-members is no doubt justifiable in theory, but not in the least worth while in that the yield would be far too small to be worth the trouble. To tax any of the proceeds of mutual trade is, in our view, equally indefensible whether the surplus is distributed as "divi," or accumulated as "reserve," or used in other ways. Is the Prime Minister quite sure his original pledge was confined to the "divi," and if so, on what ground did he so confine it?

The Severn Barrage

The Report of the Severn Barrage Committee of the Economic Advisory Council is a technical document, dealing with a proposed capital expenditure of £38,000,000 on the barrage itself, and a further £12,000,000 on related public works. It is thus by far the largest scheme for public enterprise that has come up since the Weir Report on the electrification of the main-line railways. Is it destined to share the same fate? To us the case for the barrage appears on economic grounds much more conclusive than the case for the Weir Report ever was. The finance of the Weir scheme rested on very hypothetical foundations, whereas the present report seems to show conclusively that the construction of the barrage has the advantage in cheapness over alternative methods of supplying increased electrical energy certain to be needed by the time the scheme can be finished. There is a strong case for some form of railway electrification, though not necessarily for the form proposed in the Weir Report. There is an even stronger case for the Severn Barrage, especially at a time when public opinion is already for the most part converted to the policy of public spending on productive enterprises calculated both to stimulate employment in the present and to increase industrial efficiency in the future.

War on the Slums

The Anti-Housing Bill—whose official title is the Housing (Financial Provisions) Bill—passed its third reading in the Commons on Monday. Innocent readers of Sir Hilton Young's speech might suppose that this was a generous and epoch-making measure. Its purpose, he declared, was to provide "a better and fuller supply of small houses for the working-classes, and a swifter and more efficient remedy for the deep-seated evil of the slums." In fact it has little to do with slum clearance; the Greenwood Act of 1930 still holds the field in that respect. Its real object is the abolition of the Wheatley subsidy, and it is ludicrous to pretend that, with this cleared away, we can look forward confidently to private enterprise showering desirable and inexpensive dwellings on the poor. It is significant that the Minister was attacked not only by the Labour Party and the Liberals, but from his own benches. Those who have studied the articles and the correspondence in our columns on the proposal for a National Housing Corporation will, we hope, keep up the pressure for a serious treatment of this great social scandal. Sir Hilton Young has gone so far as to set up a Departmental Committee to examine the problem, and he professes himself to be inspired by a holy zeal for war on the slums. But he is a warrior who needs to be pushed into the battle.

CRASH

Two days ago no one could have foreseen what the American banking situation would be to-day; and to-day no one can foresee what it will be in two days' time. For events wait not upon the operation of economic forces, but upon the even profounder mysteries that occur in the minds of men. There was no particular reason why a complete collapse of the American banking system should come at this special moment. It might have come sooner, or it might have been longer delayed. Nor, now that it has come, can its course and consequences be prophesied with any confidence; for the future depends on the courage and good sense with which the situation is handled, not only by President Roosevelt and his advisers, but also by the American Congress and the American public.

On the face of the matter, what has happened can be simply enough explained. The depositors in the American banks have lost belief in the solvency of these institutions. Many Americans have also lost faith in the stability of the dollar—a doubt shared by foreigners holding balances in the United States. Consequently there set in a run on the banks too powerful for any banking system in the world to have met without the use of emergency measures; and at the same time a run on gold and a movement, which threatened to become irresistible, towards the transformation of dollar balances into Canadian, French, British, or any other less menaced currency. This situation, unless banks were everywhere to close their doors and the gold backing of the American currency was to melt away, could be met only by an internal banking moratorium and a suspension of the supply of gold for export and of foreign exchange. These, however, are no more than short-run emergency measures; they do nothing to cure the troubles out of which the panic arose.

These troubles go deep. In very many cases—and indeed in all, when once a universal run had set in—the depositors were perfectly right in doubting the safety of their money. A great many banks—far more than have been assisted by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation—were insolvent in face of the tremendous fall in the value of securities and of real estate. Heavily involved themselves in security holdings, and no less heavily involved through the fall in the value of securities and real estate mortgaged or deposited as collateral by their customers, thousands of American banks were not only "frozen up," but also, on any realistic balancing of assets and liabilities, actually insolvent. But for the activities of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation there would have been a far more serious and widespread epidemic of bank failures during the past year than there was in 1931. The Corporation, in the hope of a recovery of values, kept all but the most hopeless concerns on their legs by large advances, most of which are still not repaid. These injections of monetary morphia only deadened pain and kept the patients alive, without contributing in any way to recovery, or even to the liquidation of unsound positions over most of the field. The root of the trouble is that the depositors who started the panic were in the main justified; and, when once the panic had started, everyone was justified in sharing it.

Of course, this fundamental unsoundness of the American banking system arose out of the faulty structure and consequent wrong policy of the system itself. Over here, we are apt—or were apt till the other day—to think of the mess of old-time American finance as having been cleaned up by the Federal Reserve Act, and of the Federal Reserve Banks as having effective control over the situation. But this was never the case. The Federal Reserve system covers only one-third of the banks, though these hold two-thirds of the deposits, in the United States. Even the banks in the system, and still more those outside it, are free to go their own way within very elastic limits. Nor are these banks at all like our British banks. America has no system of branch banking, whereby risks are spread over a wide area and over many types of business. She has instead nearly twenty thousand separate banks, ranging from the great New York concerns, with their international ramifications, to countless small town and rural banks, which have been hit tremendously hard by the decline in agricultural prices and in the value of real estate. The separate States have concurrent jurisdiction with the United States in banking matters; and there is behind this localised system, with all its faults, an immense traditional hostility to the power of "big finance," a traditional insistence on "State rights," and a large amount of small town and parochial patriotism certain to be powerfully vocal in Congress when any attempt is made to clean up the mess.

It is easy enough to demonstrate that, in the interests of efficiency, America ought to scrap her localised banking system and replace the countless separate banks by a few big banks in each federal reserve district, if not over the country as a whole, with full freedom to open branches and a due care for preserving the liquidity of their assets. But against how many local vested interests and powerful prejudices is such a project going to break? And who can fairly deny that, if the Americans have every reason to be in a panic at the unsoundness of the banking system as it is, they are also not without grounds for fearing a banking monopoly in the hands of the big business interests?

It is easy enough for us to say that the present crisis is due to an utter misconception of sound banking principles, that the American banks never ought to have let themselves become involved in the speculative boom in securities and real estate before 1929, and that they ought to turn over a new leaf and worship the god of liquidity with the same religious fervour as our own Big Five. To demand that is to demand a complete change in the financing of American business operations; and that, even if it can be done at all, certainly cannot be done in the midst of the present crisis, or as a means of handling the immediate emergency.

Mr. Roosevelt has at any rate begun by showing determination, though no one knows yet—and perhaps he does not know himself—what it is that he is determined to do. He has begun with a universal bank holiday, which was inevitable in face of a panic which would otherwise have resulted in currency withdrawals on a positively fantastic scale, and with an embargo on the export or earmarking of gold, and on the free market in foreign exchange—steps also inevitable in face of the huge possibilities of a flight from the dollar. Consequently America, though she holds a large part of the world's gold reserves, is now for the time being off the gold standard;

and it is doubtful whether, if her defection continues, the gold standard will be able to function anywhere. No one knows yet what the dollar is, or is going to be, worth in terms of other currencies. No one knows what the vast mass of international debts reckoned in dollars means, or is going to mean. Until these matters are resolved, a new element of sheer insecurity is added to the world's troubles.

The most likely policy, as we go to press, seems to be one of maintaining the old gold-parity of the dollar on the basis of restricted dealings, whilst rigging up a jury banking system for home purposes. But, however successfully the technical banking crisis may be overcome, by these or other means, the new President's rather cryptic utterances do not suggest that he comes into office equipped with any thought-out plan for far-reaching constructive action to remedy the roots of the disease.

In these circumstances any solution of the American debt problem has to be postponed for the moment. It is harder to estimate how the new crash will react on the prospects of the World Economic Conference. Will the Americans as a result of the crash be more inclined to join with us and others in a world attempt to stabilise currencies on a new basis and restore the mechanism of capitalist trade? Or will they elect rather to attempt the building up of a closed economic system of their own, apart from other countries?

Of course, this latter attempt would involve the most drastic reorganisation of the American economic system. It would ruin the cotton exporters of the South, and react disastrously on the American exporting industries. It is most unlikely to be made on rational grounds. But who can say that, in the present world situation, problems are likely to be settled on rational grounds, or even that the most rational solution is most likely to be right? The mental processes of the asylum are not those of the laboratory; and it can be argued that in a mad world we are likely to fare least ill if we are all mad together. Mr. Wells, in one of his best stories, has exposed the proverb which tells that "in the country of the blind, the one-eyed man is king."

Directly contrary morals will be drawn from this new crisis. On the one hand it will be urged that this fresh menace must surely at last drive the capitalist countries together for a real attempt to end the crisis by international action. On the other it will be asked with increasing persistence whether it is worth while, in face of these added calamities, to waste time at all in patching up a capitalist system so thoroughly rotten as ours has shown itself to be. Against this revolutionary view it may be argued that, even if economic conditions point more and more strongly to the need for a radical Socialist reconstruction, world political conditions appear, for the present, to be decisively against its practicability. On the other hand again it seems clear that the American collapse has now gone too far to be even stemmed by any measures of mere monetary inflation, however extensive, and that world capitalism does not seem to be prepared with any project, except inflation, for setting the old system again on its feet. And yet if world capitalism is not prepared for drastic international reconstruction, what is the alternative? Collapse so spectacular as that which has overwhelmed the United States to-day has at least the merit of making men face that menacing question.

"UNEXAMPLED VICTORY"

[From a Correspondent in Berlin]

LAST Sunday's elections registered the defeat of parliamentary democracy in Germany; the Nazis and the Nationalists, the Government parties, were together able to win 340 seats in a Reichstag of 647, and 254 out of 474 in the Prussian Diet. Hitler's *Völkische Beobachter* records an "unexampled victory." Unexampled chiefly in its meanness, one felt, as one drove round Berlin's working-class quarters on election day. Everywhere the very police buildings were heavily beflagged with Nazi Swastikas; even in Wedding and Neukölln, where the streets used to be thick with Communist and Socialist flags, there were only the Nazi emblem and the black-white-red flag of the Nationalists to be seen. At each polling-station representatives of the parties are accustomed to stand behind exhorting placards; but since all Socialist and Communist propaganda and placards were forbidden, their young men often carried merely a large 2 or 3, the numbers of their party lists; these had somehow not been forbidden. Meanwhile the Nazi youths, enrolled as auxiliary police, patrolled the streets in their party caps, together with the rifles and revolvers of their promotion. One of these Hitler heroes was to be seen making assurance more than doubly sure, for he had armed himself with four rifles or carbines at once. Inside the Berlin polling-booths there were no signs of intimidation; that in one form or another would be easier in country districts. There is, of course, no way of discovering how many known Socialists and Communists were beaten up on Sunday night for exercising their right to vote.

The rise in the Nazi vote from 11,737,015 last November to 17,269,529 this week is indeed astounding, even in view of the record percentage—eighty-nine—of electors who went to the polls. Hitler claims to have awakened the "sleeping hosts" of those who have not hitherto bothered to vote, and undoubtedly the new four million since November voted for him almost to a man. It is fairly clear, too, that some of his new supporters come from at least a temporary Communist allegiance; the genuine Communist Party has never been anything like so large as "protest" votes in 1932 implied. Nevertheless, the German Communist Party cannot be despised. Berlin has probably been more terrorised than any other city during the election campaign, especially since the Reichstag fire, yet the Communist vote in Berlin last Sunday was still higher than last July, and this despite imprisoned leaders and the need for known members of the party to avoid the vigilant eyes of Nazis at the polling-stations. Although the Nazi vote in Greater Berlin is up from 720,613 to 1,031,045, the capital is still Red, for the Socialists and Communists polled 1,376,705 together. The laurels for fidelity must in fact go to the much derided Social Democrats, the party of the Trade Unions, who have known how to face adversity before. Deprived of press and propaganda, and with many of their leaders under arrest or threat of assault, their poll in the Reich has dropped from 7,247,959 only to 7,177,294. They have won, moreover, a concealed victory. The governmental *Börsen Zeitung* gleefully points out that the Socialists have lost 900,000 votes in Prussia, where Captain Göring's administration has indeed been "unexampled"; but the corollary is more remarkable—that at such a time as this the Socialists have gained 700,000 votes in the non-Prussian States of the Reich. The *Börsen Zeitung* wished to prove that the Nazis had really invaded something more than the domains of a disgruntled middle class and of unemployed workers, had really made an impression on organised labour, but the figures scarcely justify this assumption. The election would have a greater historic significance if they could be made to do so.

For those who cannot welcome the Hitlerisation of Germany the saddest result of the election is the collapse of South Germany. Here the cleverness of the ruse of firing the Reichstag has borne its richest fruit. In Berlin it has already become a chesnut to ask "Why did Van der Lübbe burn his

shirt?" Answer: "Because it was brown." But in distant Bavaria, where a keenly resented Communist regime prevailed for a short period after the war, the peasant at any rate—it is clearly not so true of the towns—succumbed to this well-timed event. From now on the Reich has a stronger justification in overriding the States; in Hamburg the Nazis expelled the authorities on election night, and to-day the Reich is appointing police commissioners in Hesse and Bremen.

The Centre party, which stands on the whole for liberal principles in Germany, and which, as conniving at Marxism, has been seriously hampered during the election campaign, has stood its ground well. In only two of the thirty-five constituencies of Germany are the Nazis to-day outnumbered by another party; it is the Centre both in the Cologne-Aix and the Coblenz-Trier circle which stands at the head of the poll. The Catholic workmen have kept the Centre only a little way behind the Nazis in North Westphalia and West Düsseldorf too.

From one point of view the political future is clear almost to dullness; the principles of Republican Germany have been smashed, and if and when the Left revives, it will be an exacerbated Left. The more one observes here, the more convinced one becomes that the Left has been beaten chiefly on theatrical production. The Republic has lacked pageantry—uniforms, *journées*, star performers, torchlight processions. In a contest in these terms, the Nazis know exactly how to win; they have stormed Germany by procession. Standing among the crowds which watched the Stahlhelm parade on election day one had the impression that many of the spectators—the waverers in any political arena—were, far from being devout, just delighted with the entertainment, and delighted to be able to point out "der Papen" or "der Seldte" to one another. The Stahlhelm is not, of course, politically popular; the Nationalist party, with which it is associated, added few on Sunday to its three million voters of November, despite the patronage of the President. The "fourteen years" of "abominable Marxism" have provided the Chancellor with his ammunition against the Left; the post-war governments must be condemned for neglecting stagecraft in favour of social insurance which the slump made into a perfectly thankless objective. As for what is now to be expected, the last year has made one as nervous of prophecy as of talking politics above a whisper in Berlin to-day. There are as many rumours as ever there were, but only one thing is certain—that the prospect both for Germany and her neighbours is disagreeable. Some people are relieved that Hitler has got his victory in the hope that terrorism will wane; others are afraid that the Göring method has only just begun. If the latter be true, the very Nationalists will become Germany's Liberal Party, since they preserve some respect for a show of decent behaviour. Perhaps the fact that Hitler has won a "constitutional" victory makes it more difficult for him to shelve the constitution. We are also assured that there will be no changes in the Cabinet. Should these assurances be deceptive, should Hitler and Hugenberg fall out, the army has probably delayed too long to take action against the Brown Shirts now, more especially if the South German Governments are cowed by the electoral gains of the Nazis. The Reichstag is to meet before the end of March; when the House assembles the election victory will be accentuated by the absence of those deputies of the Left who will be prevented, because they are under arrest or for other reasons, from taking their places. It remains to be seen whether the Centre can reassert itself, since constitutional changes require a two-thirds majority. Captain Göring on the day after the election expressed his satisfaction that for the first time since Bismarckian days the Centre has lost its key position, not through its own losses but because of the Nazi gains. Captain Göring cultivates the determined jaw of post-war Fascist dictators. One is tempted to suspect that he regards himself as holding the key position in Germany to-day; he certainly appears to be the country's gaoler.

Berlin, March 7th.

A LONDON DIARY

THE crisis is producing a lot of odd incidentals in the United States. Some States, I am told, can only constitutionally declare a "bank holiday" for festive reasons—a difficulty which nonplussed the Governor of Kentucky until someone suggested that Kentucky should thank God its banks were not as bad as Ohio's! The President, I see, has now taken powers to open money-boxes: the question naturally arises whether this includes stockings and teapots, not to speak of the armoured cars in which the gangsters are taking their money over the Canadian frontier. In New York I hear of Clubs where bridge is being played for tinned food. Jack Oakie, the film comedian, is said to have issued his own currency notes. At the bottom, beneath the amount due, is printed the words "I hope you get it."

* * *

Sometimes as I walk along a suburban street where each window seems to proclaim that life's highest ambition is to be able to keep the lace curtains neatly darned, I forget for the moment that men are invincibly adventurous and splendidly unutilitarian. Nothing else could account for the new attempt on Everest. Not many weeks ago I talked with one of the advance party that has just started out in order to have time to get used to living in high altitudes. He made no pretence that the expedition served any scientific purpose. The peaks of the Himalayas can now be seen and photographed most efficiently by aeroplane. And all but the top eight hundred frozen feet of Everest has already been conquered. On them two good climbers lost their lives—no one knows how—in the last attempt. The difficulty up there is exhaustion and lack of oxygen. Oxygen cylinders are so heavy that it is a nice point whether the additional strength given by the oxygen itself out-balances the additional energy used up by carrying the cylinders. For this year's attempt I gather that the probable policy is for the climbers to try to accustom themselves to living and sleeping in the rarefied air and for the two men who are most fit at the last camp to make a dash for the top without oxygen. A totally useless adventure. That, of course, is its attraction. It is even doubtful whether the climbers on the last peak will know whether they have or have not reached the top of the world: they may be delirious or only half-conscious for lack of oxygen. It is all, as I said, quite irrational, and the utilitarian can reasonably urge that, in a world apparently crashing to ruin for lack of ability to organise it, able young men have no right to risk their lives on so desperate a venture. And yet this mad effort to stand on the roof of the world is a symbol of something more encouraging than the rows of neatly darned lace-curtains.

* * *

Sir Samuel Hoare and the Government maintain superficially a bland satisfaction with the results of their Indian policy. Everything which I hear from India gives me the impression that, on any but the shortest view, the results are lamentable. Like all Governments, the world over, committed to the repression of a nationalist movement for self-government, the Indian administration is pursuing its impossible task with conscientious stupidity and is steadily turning moderates into extremists. Here is an example, which was given last month, of the unnecessary and petty tyranny to which Indians of every variety of political opinion are being subjected. In Allahabad nine well-known persons, of whom only two were connected with the Congress, announced a public meeting to be held in the Pushotam Das Park to commemorate the anniversary of the late Pandit Motilal Nehru on February 6th. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, whom everyone knows and respects as a Liberal of the most "moderate" views, was to preside. At midday on February 6th the District Magistrate issued a formal notice under a section of the Criminal Procedure Code forbidding the holding of any such meeting in the Park or anywhere else within the Civil Lines of Allahabad. This was done without any previous consultation between the Govern-

ment officials and the conveners or Sir T. B. Sapru. Although the notice forbade the holding of the meeting anywhere within the Civil Lines, I understand that the Police informed one of the conveners that the District Magistrate had no objection to the meeting being held elsewhere than in the Park, but by that time it was too late to do anything. Not unnaturally moderate opinion has been exasperated by this high-handed action.

* * *

I have just received a letter from a Kenya settler which puts a point of view seldom stated over here. My correspondent writes: "We are very interested in various letters and articles in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION about our new goldfields in Kagamega. Opinion, of course, is not divided out here. One and all are solid for the native being turned out and the land being given to the white man for prospecting. Morally, it is all wrong, also legally I suppose we have not a leg to stand on. But it is sometimes forgotten that the white people out here have not had much of a show. Kenya was intended as a soldier settler's country—or that is what the settlers were told. In practically every case these soldier settlers are now absolutely down and out. In most cases they came out here with no knowledge of farming and with no idea of economics. Kagamega has given them a glimmer of hope, not only for its gold-producing qualities, but with the idea that, should it prove a large goldfield, they could eventually return to their farms, settle and grow crops to meet the internal demand, which would then certainly be increased. The idea of making money to enable settlers to return home to live in England has vanished. Everyone seems to wish to build, develop and live for the rest of their days out here. One feels in the present state of affairs at home that it would be a pity to discourage even a handful of people who are determined to make good and make Kenya into something worth while. But I suppose the Kagamega is entitled to his land, and perhaps if we could see many years ahead we should do ourselves more good if he kept it. In any case, if Kagamega does become a goldfield, don't let it be another Transvaal!"

* * *

The curious form of insanity which consists in a fixed belief that all the ill in the world comes from the Jews is not confined to Germany. A number of Members of Parliament who accepted an invitation to a "friends of Palestine banquet," received the following letter: "Your name has been noted as that of a guest and supporter of the enemies of your country." The letter is headed "The Imperial Fascist League," and signed by the Secretary-General of that organisation. A letter has also reached this office which reads:

> If we go to war with the Japs because they refuse to have any more Jews in their country and New York Jews hold valuable concessions in Manchuria, how much fighting will be done by Messrs. Harold Laski, Julius Elias, Victor Gollancz, and your other Jew friends and pacifists who are engaged in the anti-Jap agitation?

* * *

On March 2nd, I read in the *British Weekly*:

> There and then, forty-two nations, acting according to powers which had been freely conceded to them in the event of such an issue arising as threatened the peace of the world, delivered their judgment. That judgment was unanimous. Having delivered the judgment, they invited the Power which in their view was in the wrong to accept their decision.
>
> Compared with such a fact, the circumstance that the Power which had been judged to be in error refused to submit is a minor matter, is, indeed, a mere circumstance.

Which reminds me of a passage from *Much Ado About Nothing*:

> *Dogberry:* This is your charge: you shall comprehend all vagrom men; you are to bid any man stand, in the prince's name.
>
> *Second Watch:* How if a' will not stand?
>
> *Dogberry:* Why, then, take no note of him, but let him go; and presently call the rest of the watch together, and thank God you are rid of a knave.

* * *

It is probable that Sir John Simon in his game had the better of the opening stages, but he missed his way when the position was complicated, and capturing the wrong way cost him a piece.—From the *Times* report of a chess match between Cambridge University and the House of Commons.

* * *

The Junior League is the recruiting ground for rough diamonds that are turned into stars.—Provincial paper.

CRITIC

"REMEMBER 1914"

I AM remembering all right as I park my car in Spa Road, Bermondsey (a detective carefully makes a note of its number), and push my way into the Town Hall to see what a 1933 Anti-war Congress is like. In 1914 the official leaders of Labour in the Second International pledged themselves to co-ordinate strike action to prevent war; a few weeks later most of them were recruiting troops, or getting jobs in support of their respective kings and countries. In 1933 the official leaders of Labour are not present at all at the Anti-war Congress. In 1914 war was imminent and everyone knew what the war would be and broadly how the European Powers would be grouped. To-day everyone fears war, but no one is sure which war, or when it will come. If there were any chance of Governments paying attention to their obligations under the Covenant, the danger would be that sanctions against Japan might develop into war. That clearly enough is the least likely possibility. Much more menacing is the threat of a Russo-Japanese war, coupled perhaps with a simultaneous war on the western frontiers of Russia. Perhaps Hitler will attack Poland? Or will war once more begin in Jugoslavia, and Italy, Austria, Hungary, Germany, the Little Entente and all the rest of us be quickly involved? No one knows, and the more optimistic of us may feel that in threats of war as in other threats there is some temporary safety in numbers. But what we do know is that all the old causes of war are still present; that there is again a precarious balance of power (with every party trying, as always, to weight the balance in its favour); that diplomacy is still the servant of economic imperialism; that States still put their sacred self-interest in front of their pledges as members of an international League; that as the world economic crisis develops, striking with cumulative intensity first one nation and then another, each State adopts remedies to save itself, which intensify the misery of the whole and bring more close every month the total strangulation of trade and the mood of desperation which leads to war. We know, too, that war to-day, wheresoever it begins, involves the whole world, and that nothing that we have learnt to call civilisation is likely to survive its universal desolation.

No one at the Congress, whatever his camp, has any confidence in the League of Nations. True, there is this further difference from 1914: Japan, unlike Germany, has been forced to plead her case at Geneva, and the aggression of her militarists has been condemned by the other Governments. But after this Japanese incident nobody has the effrontery to claim that the League is a bulwark against war when the interests of great Powers are involved. Nor does anyone attach any importance to the Disarmament Conference. During its interminable months of delay and evasion armament firms have been doing a roaring trade, and to-day the world is better equipped for general murder than ever before. It is not unnatural that people should look for another way of preventing war. Many of those who still desperately pin their faith to Geneva are now willing enough to help in building an organisation to which they can turn if the League fails.

Now, in such an organisation Communists are certain to play a prominent part, if only because they speak with the most certainty, are the most glibly equipped with an alternative theory and plan of action and the least timid in advancing it. If they let down their followers it will not be from lack of courage or assurance, or from flirting with the other side, but rather from a self-defeatist policy of spying on each other, from a doctrinaire fundamentalism, from an apparently incurable notion that accuracy of statement and efficiency in small

things are contemptible and bourgeois virtues. But the Congress at Bermondsey was by no means wholly communistic. There were numerous representatives of pacifist organisations: one of the most effective speakers was Mr. Digby, a representative of the Oxford undergraduates, who have now, thanks to Mr. Randolph Churchill and the *Daily Telegraph*, reaffirmed by more than double their original majority the refusal of the Union to fight for King and Country. Behind him were a group, or perhaps, I should say, a chorus of colleagues who chanted vigorously that they would not in any circumstances fight for King and Country—men who flaunt their white feathers as other men carry banners before them, men whose virile pacifism has been a hundred times reinforced by being called "yellow-bellied pacifists" and "unsexed decadents." The Congress was also supported by well-known Quakers and by literary men as various as Aldous Huxley and Hugh Walpole. But the bulk of the thousand delegates were rank and file Trade Unionists. There were only three general secretaries of National Trade Unions; the rest were mainly railwaymen, transport workers, chemical engineers, electricians, and such-like representatives of Trade Union branches, local Trades Councils and Labour Parties.

The fact that Communists played a prominent part—a part as usual out of proportion to their numbers—was enough to ensure that the Congress would receive scant notice in the newspapers, and that it would not be supported by many of the national representatives of the big Trade Unions. The outsider would naturally infer that the Congress was merely a meeting of Communists and cranks. The fact that nearly £200 could be collected in a scene of tumultuous excitement in order to support a strike of sailors who were, as later events showed, in any case unable to avoid taking their cargo of war material to Japan, might suggest that enthusiasm outweighed judgment. Indeed, I asked myself whether you could really expect revolutionary action of any kind from men who at a moment's notice could throw so large a sum of money into an old flag for a forlorn cause. But the argument is a dangerous one. I suspect that more than one man walked home because he put his railway fare into the collection. A single donation of £64 was given by an anonymous working man, who explained in a note to the chairman that he had never earned more than a few pounds a week, but thought this way as good as another of spending his savings. For myself I found the Congress more impressive because it was largely composed of the rank and file and the non-commissioned officers of Labour. Never has a movement been more sceptical of its nominal leaders than the British Labour movement to-day. The significance of this Congress was that the absence of the type of leader who followed the popular cry in 1914 was scarcely noticed; it was taken for granted that a genuine anti-war movement must be organised by obscure men, often technical workers in key positions in industry, who had no public position to maintain, and who came to the Conference not in the main to hear speeches, but to get down in sectional meetings to clear-cut plans for organising in each town and industry a war resisters' movement. It may be that they do not stand a chance, and that the idea will collapse like other heroic notions, but I confess that I found more reason for cheerfulness in this obscure and boycotted Congress than in the announcement that Mr. MacDonald and Sir John Simon are on their way to save the Disarmament Conference at Geneva.

JOURNALIST

EXCELLENT

MR. BERNARD SHAW is reported to have said that he thought the American financial crisis, which has been depressing so many people, an excellent thing. I do not know enough about financial crises to be able to tell whether the latest of them is an excellent thing either for America or for anybody else; but when I read Mr. Shaw's cheerful comment I began to wonder whether he had not, perhaps, discovered the right attitude to adopt to all catastrophes. I can easily imagine that on the occasion of the Fall of Man, when all Heaven was in mourning, there was one smiling, philosophic angel who protested to his peers: "This is the best possible thing that could have happened." And certainly, if he had foreseen the future, he could have made out an excellent case for his rosy theory. Without the Fall of Man we should have had scarcely any of those things that we look on as the enrichments of history. Christianity itself would never have come into existence. The Bible would have been as eventless and monotonous a record as a child's diary. There would have been none of those great colonising and missionary movements that have carried civilisation to the four corners of the earth. Had Eve not succumbed to temptation there would have been no British Empire, and Japan could not have planted the banner of peace and disarmament on the Great Wall of China. Medicine would have remained in the Dark Ages. Psychology would never have been invented, and, however long we had lived, we should never have lived to see the modern developments of the novel. Divorce law reform would have been impossible. We should have missed, indeed, almost everything that makes life interesting or that gives the ordinary human being a purpose in life.

Again, if one takes the occasion of the Flood, it is easy to imagine the last reporter, as he struggled in the water, calling out to the bearded philosopher who was swimming near him a request for his opinion of the catastrophe of the moment, and it is easy to imagine the bearded philosopher, as he sank for the last time, gasping out enthusiastically: "Excellent! Just what was needed!" And would he not have been right? It is universally admitted that in the years just before the Flood what the human race needed was a lesson, and the Flood certainly taught it a lesson. It may be objected that the human race did not learn the lesson, but then the human race never does learn the lesson that is taught it. At the same time, everybody recognises the importance of going on with the teaching. What is the Old Testament but the story of a great race that was taught more lessons than have been taught by all the schoolmasters since the beginning of time and never learnt a single one of them? What is all history but a repetition of the same story with variations? Still, who but a weakling would propose that the teaching should now cease? A few years ago, all good men saw the necessity of teaching Germany a lesson. A little later all good men saw the necessity of teaching Ireland a lesson. There is a moral enthusiasm for teaching—even for teaching the unteachable—that survives all disappointments.

I wonder whether since the Flood any catastrophe has happened in which a man of amiable disposition could find no redeeming excellence? The Great Fire of London has been praised for leading to an improvement in sanitation. The eruptions of Vesuvius, I have been told, have done an immense amount of good in improving the quality of the wine that comes from the neighbouring vineyards. I do not know what case is made out by the apologist for tidal waves, but I have no doubt it is a good one. The tornado and typhoon, I am sure, are blessings in disguise; at least, I am sure that somebody says so. Even wars, according to many authorities, are not the disasters they seem, but do all sorts of good to the human race. There have been authorities in the past who pointed out that it is the great merit of war that it gets rid of the surplus population and so saves us from famine. This, of course, is a very good thing for "us," but not so good for the surplus population. Those who advanced this argument for war never seemed to envisage a war that would get rid of "us" and so save the surplus population from famine. One of the most difficult things in war, indeed, is to decide exactly which is "us" and which is the surplus population. Many people thought during the last war, for example, that quite a considerable fragment of the surplus population remained at home and was not got rid of at all. Even if war ceased to be defended on the surplus-population theory, however,

am sure that it has other merits that will always continue to commend it to those people who take long views in human affairs.

I am, I confess, a confirmed believer in blessings in disguise. I prefer them undisguised when I myself happen to be the person blessed; in fact, I can scarcely recognise a blessing in disguise except when it is a blessing to somebody else. But the theory that blessings in disguise are constantly happening to other people I find consoling, and it enables me to bear their troubles without sinking into the blackest pessimism. One cannot study the lives of great men without noticing how often an apparent misfortune was for them an exceedingly fortunate thing. If Walter Scott had not been crippled by disease as a child his genius might not have been sunned in the lore of country places that made him a poet and a romancer. It is easy to convince oneself to-day that his illness was for him an excellent thing; but how his parents would have failed at the time to appreciate the wisdom of a friend who had beamed at them and said: "It's the best possible thing that could have happened to the child." I have a friend who maintains that an attack of pneumonia in boyhood altered the course of his life for the better; but, all the same, the doctor on coming out of the sick-room did not congratulate the mother and whisper: "This pneumonia's fine."

Yet it was. And nearly everybody one knows has had some experience of blessings in disguise. There are men to whom—difficult though it is to believe—the loss of money has been a blessing in disguise. We do not normally rush up to a friend who has lost his savings to tell him how lucky he is; but, if we knew a blessing in disguise when we saw one, we might reasonably do so. There is many a man who felt that the world had come to an end on the day on which he was sacked from a job, and who now looks back on being sacked as one of the luckiest incidents in his career. One hears of so many instances, indeed, of bad luck turning into good that one sometimes wonders whether one ought not to be sorry for the people to whom the apparently lucky things happen. If illness, poverty, and misfortune produce such excellent results, ought we not to pity those who are healthy, wealthy and fortunate, and so miss golden opportunities of happiness? The truth is, however, we can appreciate blessings in disguise at their full worth only when they belong to the past.

We adopt the same attitude in regard to nations as in regard to our own lives. We read history, and we see the past of Europe positively scintillating with blessings in disguise; but how unwelcome they were at the time! Most people believe that the conquest of southern and western Europe by the Romans was a blessing in disguise; but the inhabitant of Gaul, as he had his head cleft with a sword, was too lacking in prescience to realise what a glorious thing was happening to Europe. "Excellent!" a philosopher might have murmured to him. "This is a great day for civilisation." And so, conceivably it was. Yet there has never been a war since then that sensitive men, blind to all the good work that was being done, have not lamented as a tragedy. The individual is an egotist in his sufferings, and I doubt whether he would even be comforted if he were told that scholars centuries afterwards would be writing essays to point out the beneficial results of the sufferings being inflicted on him. And most of us remain equally egotistic to-day. Historians a thousand years hence may see quite clearly that Providence has been showering blessings in disguise lavishly on us ever since 1914; yet we show as little gratitude as if we had been born into one of the miserable periods of history. Many people feel positively nervous as the deluge of blessings continues. Let us live in the hopeful spirit of Mr. Shaw and, forgetting our petty personal anxieties, take long views. If we do, we shall see that everything is going excellently everywhere—in Germany, Italy, Russia, the United States, Japan and England. We may as well believe that as anything else. It may even be true. Y. Y.

A GENTLE REMINDER

TO HERR HITLER AND ALL DICTATORS

WHILE all opponents still ungaoled
  Watched, quivering, for your "Storm Troops'" sallies,
Dreading the penalties entailed,
By your decree, on those who failed
  To chorus "Hitler über alles";
While Reds, and magistrates, and Jews,
  Trembled before your least subordinate,
What German, Hitler, could refuse
  To gratify your pride inordinate?

The press sang paeans in your praise
  (Having the censorship before them);
High-brows, with arguments to raise,
Eyed the machine-guns, went their ways
  And very prudently forbore them.
And with all voices hushed save those
  Who as a heaven-born prophet deemed you,
You must have marvelled, I suppose,
  How very much all folks esteemed you.

And yet, to you, and all who blend
  Dictatorship with self-inflation,
I'd venture, as a candid friend,
With deference to recommend
  One infinitely trite quotation:
In "Peter Bell" it first appeared
  (Refer to Wordsworth's Works Collected)—
"Full twenty times was Peter feared
  For once that Peter was respected."

MACFLECKNOE

Correspondence

THE HOUSING PROGRAMME

SIR,—I desire to thank various correspondents who have written with regard to the proposed National Housing Board, and to say that their suggestions and criticisms are being very carefully considered, and I hope it may be possible to make a fuller reply ere long.

In the meantime I would like to refer to the very interesting letter from Dr. W. A. Robson. In view of the nature of the housing problem, some parts of which have a social character, and in view of the necessity for undivided responsibility in connection with funds which may be subject to a guarantee, I have hitherto thought that perhaps the line of division in this case might be as between an advisory body and an executive body. The circumstances of electrical supply, though affording a useful precedent for consideration, are in many ways different. The point is, however, one needing further consideration.

In reference to the letter signed by "An Architect," the proposal with which I am connected has not contemplated superseding or setting aside local authorities in regard to any branches of the housing problem with which they are dealing, or which they may wish to continue to deal directly. There are, however, many local authorities who have assumed housing duties with some reluctance, and there are many sections connected with the complete solution of the housing and slum problems which few local authorities have so far taken up. There appears to be a need for an organisation which could act in co-operation with local authorities or on their behalf, where they should wish it.

Thanking you for the opportunities which you have afforded for the discussion of this problem.

32 Old Queen Street, S.W.1. RAYMOND UNWIN

SIR,—In view of the present discussion on housing and slum clearance, perhaps one or two concrete examples of overcrowding and housing conditions in the slums to-day may be of interest. The homes I describe I have visited within the last month in the course of my rounds as a social worker, and I can give chapter and verse to anyone who wishes to verify the conditions. They

are all in Hoxton, one of the poorest—and one of the most criminal—districts of London.

The family T—— consists of father, out of work, mother, daughter aged seventeen in daily work, two boys and a girl of school age; the youngest is eight years old. Their home is a room the size of a rich man's bathroom. The sleeping accommodation is as follows: mother and two girls in the double bed (which takes up two-thirds of the room), father and one boy on the couch and the other boy on a chair bed. In the daytime the double bed serves as a table for all purposes—for preparing food as well as eating it—and also as a chair for the two youngest children at meal times. The rent is 4s. Mrs. T. has had her name down at the Shoreditch Town Hall for better accommodation for five years. The N.S.P.C.C. has called, the sanitary inspector has called, and pronounced them, out of the wisdom of his heart, overcrowded. But nothing has been done. This is probably because they are only prepared to pay at most 10s. rent, which would mean only two rooms, whereas probably the municipal authorities would insist on their moving to a three-roomed home at a higher rent.

The family B—— consists of two parents and three boys of school age. Upstairs in a small bedroom sleep the parents and youngest boy (aged seven) in one bed. Downstairs, the two other boys sleep in a single bed in the living room and kitchen. This is a small outhouse in the yard, built for an undertaker's workshop. It has three outside walls and is very cold in winter and intolerably hot in summer. One wall has a water pipe tap on the outside—the inside is oozing with damp. One boy suffers from rheumatism. The mother is a box maker, and uses this room as a workshop. The smell of the glue is almost overpowering. (It is further inhabited by two large black cats and a pet tortoise, called Bill, who lives under the kitchen range.)

The family X, consisting of two parents and three children of school age, live in one small top-front room. When the house was re-faced the front wall of the room was pulled down and the family protected from the weather by sacking. One boy is now in hospital with rheumatism. I know of another house where at this damp and draughty moment the front wall consists of boards nailed across anyhow while repairs are in progress.

It should be borne in mind that rather sensational cases such as these are relatively rare, but that should not blind us to the fact that there are few working-class homes in London to-day where anyone has a bed to himself; that there are hundreds and hundreds where children sleep in their parents' bed; where the washing hangs out perforce in the same room where the family cooks, eats and sleeps; where one water-tap and one w.c. serve three families—and where this winter influenza, malnutrition and unemployment are causing such endless misery that as a woman said to me the other day, "It seems as if nobody ain't got no pity on us any more."

MARGARET MITCHINER

123 Cheyne Walk, S.W.10.

TAXING THE CO-OPS.

SIR,—You rightly say "There is certainly a logical case for regarding the gains made from trade by the Co-ops. with non-members as profits in the commercial sense, and even for treating Co-operative interest payments as taxable."

May I point out the gains from trade with non-members are very small and are very largely outweighed by excessive taxation under Schedules A and B, which are paid at the full rate. In the case of the largest English Co-op. Society, the Royal Arsenal, the amount of non-members' trade was less than 0·25 per cent. of the total. In the case of the largest Scottish Society, St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, the amount of non-members' trade was less than 0.05 per cent. Evidence was given placing the total net profit from non-members' trade at £30,000, and tax thereon at 5s. in the £ to £7,500.

But under Schedules A and B, Co-operative Societies paid last year upwards of £600,000, although at least 85 per cent. of co-operators are not liable and should be exempt.

As to the second point, Co-operative interest on share and loan capital is already taxable and paid by those whose income is large enough to make them liable.

As to the proposal to tax Co-operative reserves, the highest legal tribunal, the House of Lords, has said that if the origin of reserves are not taxable profits the reserves also are not taxable, and it will be grossly unfair if the present Government carry out the recommendations of their biased Committee, and penalise Co-operators. The best thing they can do is to shelve the Report as the last Coalition Government did the Report of the Royal Commission fourteen years ago.

T. SHRIMPTON

The Gurneys, Paignton.

THE BULPINGTON OF BLUP

SIR,—The Society for the Protection of Mr. Francis Birrell makes a sort of mass attack upon me in your current issue. God knows I never meant to hurt Mr. Francis Birrell. He asked for it. I wish the Society would make its campaign against me on the basis of books in which I do express my own clear and definite opinions, and not by abuse of my novels. Is there no criticism of fiction as fiction left in the world? *The Bulpington of Blup* is a novel about a human imagination, with some aunts, a dinner party, some love-making, and various emotions and intellectual reactions. But you, Sir, hand it over to Professor Laski, who is not a practised reviewer of fiction. Mr. Robert Lynd deals with it as an attack on his nationalism. Miss Cicely Hamilton in a pseudo-review in *Time and Tide*, simply expresses her dislike for what she assumes to be my world. Mr. Raymond Mortimer, through his various channels, vents the undying grievance of the conscientious objector, and so on and so on. Why could not all this stuff have been poured out over my other book, *After Democracy*, which *is* a book of beliefs and assertions, clearly stated? Or over the *Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind*? There, there is a full discussion of pacifism and the role of force in social life. Why did not Mr. Francis Birrell and his associates spread themselves all over the press about that? There, there is also an indictment of nationalism that Mr. Lynd has never answered and an estimate of the relations of armaments and patriotism that Miss Hamilton saw fit to disregard. Why run away from explicit argument when it trails its coat before you, pleading for a fight, and then come round by the back way to burke a novel?

I don't like the way the *Bulpington of Blup* has been treated. I feel like a man who has gone out to challenge the world and comes home to find that someone has "answered" him by maltreating a favourite cat. I liked that book when I did it, but now it is sore in my mind. One writes fiction for pleasure and to please. It is the easiest thing in the world to spoil a novel for both writer and reader by pinning a personal grudge upon it. I thought that book was fun and Mr. Birrell & Co. have smothered it in wrangling. Well, well. If my nature was not fundamentally angelic I should give up writing novels altogether, take to "criticism" myself and lie in wait for David, Francis, Raymond and the rest of them when they came along. But I can't do that.

H. G. WELLS

47 Chiltern Court,
Clarence Gate, N.W.1.

THE EMBARGO ON ARMS

SIR,—The Prime Minister and Sir John Simon are about to go to Geneva in an attempt to re-vitalise the Disarmament Conference. They evidently do not—or will not—realise that they are too late—that the dying conference was given its quietus by them themselves when, by an *impartial* embargo on arms, they declared Britain's neutrality.

By refusing to differentiate between aggressor and victim; by refusing to implement the verdict of the League—a verdict which they themselves were instrumental in finding—by making an independent declaration of neutrality instead of pressing for collective action (which they themselves insisted was essential), they have dealt an irreparable blow to Security.

For individual neutrality means the end of collective action. What nation in the future can have any certainty that collective action *will* be taken against an aggressor? And without that certainty there can be no Security, and without Security there can be no real Disarmament.

It is time that the implications of the Government's declaration should be realised. It is *not* an unselfish act in the interests of peace—as it was described in a letter to the *Times* this week. It is a severe blow to Security and Disarmament and a retreat from the whole post-war system in which alone is any real hope of peace.

J. B. BROWN

26 Norham Road, Oxford.

PEACE OR WAR IN EUROPE

SIR,—A paragraph of your last week's Editorial is ominously headed "Peace or War." Below these justifiably alarming captions you describe the unrest in Europe from the Polish

Corridor to the gun-running in Austria. But I wish you had gone farther, and had traced these disturbances to their common source—the deplorable Peace Treaties of 1919–23.

It is perfectly clear that those Treaties are going to be altered—sooner or later. If they are not altered by peaceful means they will be altered by force; and yet with all these "war clouds hanging over us" (as they said in 1914) no Power has yet suggested a peaceful revision at Geneva. Perhaps our politicians think the situation too hopeless; perhaps they are afraid each one of the responsibility of applying the spark to the gunpowder. If the situation *is* hopeless then war is inevitable; but let us—and why not Great Britain, who is the most disinterested party—at least make some effort to settle the question without resorting to this madness. We have signed the Kellogg Pact; and yet we are apparently not going to raise a finger to avert another of these horrible nightmares.

The disturbance caused by the famous O.U.S. debate has proved that the temper of 1914 is still with us. Unless something is done at Geneva England will not escape the general destruction; and the voices of undergraduates will only be—like that of Mr. Keir Hardie in Trafalgar Square on August 2nd, 1914—voices crying in a wilderness. GILLIAN OLIVIER

Crofton Grange,
Orpington, Kent.

THE HOUSE OF LORDS

SIR,—In the interesting article by Mr. J. Crighton and Mr. H. J. Laski in your issue of March 4th, the authors "test the volume of their (the peers) interest in politics" by the number of peers voting. It is at least reasonable to suggest that this is not a true criterion of their interest in politics, but only of their interest in the House of Lords, and that if the Upper House had greater power its members would show more enthusiasm in the exercise of that power.

The figures given in Table IV appear to me to need amplifying. The authors have found "what interests find their representation" in the Houses of Parliament. The assumption that the members of these bodies represent primarily the industries or trades in which they are concerned may or may not be a true one, but it remains an assumption. It is at least arguable that the members of the House of Commons represent their constituents rather than themselves. We read that "the House of Lords represents economic interests with an intensity even greater than that of the House of Commons"; this conclusion being drawn from a list of directorships held by members of both Houses. Does the fact that a man has a seat on the boards of several companies and a seat in the House of Lords necessarily imply that he sits in the latter purely as a representative of the former? This may be true, but to assume it without proof is to forget a long tradition of public-spirited service. It is because of this very tradition that so many companies have peers amongst their directors, as inducing confidence (even to-day) in the shareholders.

Will the authors inform us how the numbers of directors are calculated? If one man sits on the boards of several companies does he appear in the list the same number of times? There is an item: "Landowners: No. of Directors in Lords, 246." Are these directors of the Land Investment Corporations and Property Trusts which own urban property, or are they men who have formed their country estates into private companies to try to avoid the present iniquitous taxation?

It is stated that "of the nineteen peers who have held Cabinet office, fourteen have previously sat in the House of Commons." Members of the Commons are usually ennobled because of their services in that chamber, and it is natural and desirable that they should continue their services when raised to the Lords.

The article begins as an examination of the Conservative proposals for the reform of the House of Lords, and ends as an attack on the House itself. I would suggest that it is not so much the House of Lords that stands in need of reformation as its relationship to the House of Commons. G. H. THORPE

24 Francis Road,
Edgbaston, Birmingham.

BEHIND THE BARS

SIR,—I have read with great interest Mr. Gascoyen's article "Behind the Bars," in your issue of February 18th. It is written in so sympathetic and apparently reasonable a manner that it seems captious to take exception to it, especially as I agree with him in thinking that the advantages to be derived from well-organised establishments of this kind outweigh the undoubted wrongs done to the animals so imprisoned. It seems to me, however, important that we should clearly recognise zoological gardens for what they are—arbitrary houses of detention founded and preserved to stimulate and to satisfy the interest of human beings. That the moral justification of their existence is entirely anthropocentric I should have thought was beyond discussion. In Mr. Gascoyen's essay I seem to detect a tendency to rationalise.

Let us frankly acknowledge that we are deliberately sacrificing these animals chance has put in our way for the instruction and holiday diversion of members of our own kind, but do not let us make any pretence of believing that wild creatures are as well off in captivity as in a state of freedom. We may call them "Jock" and "Bill" and "Daisy" in a mood of domesticated intimacy, but this privilege is surely the sorriest compensation for their loss of liberty.

Mr. Gascoyen suggests that the larger members of the cat tribe in their mature life are concerned entirely with mating and searching for food. He writes: "I have never seen the smallest indication that any animal is interested in scenery." Though I would question the truth of this statement it is not the main point that I would wish to raise. Animals in their natural environment enjoy those wide margins of semi-conscious physical sensations that are in their case the most constant reward of living. The natural functioning of their bodies is to them a dim delight—to snuff the fresh uncontaminated air of their forests, to feel the branches touch their pelts as they advance along a jungle game track! Every hour of the day their bodies are taut with intensity, are organised, are tuned, so to speak, to their native background, and each quick sense responds to the glory of their freedom, to the glory of life.

I remember watching a leopard sharpening his claws upon a fallen log in an ecstasy of delight in merely being alive—and who has ever heard a pride of lions making the African escarpments echo and re-echo as they called to each other without suspecting that these magnificent beasts have access to emotions of feral splendour far more powerful that those we ever experience?

All animals surpass us in the stoical virtues of resignation and endurance. These lions, tigers, panthers may appear to be content, may appear to submit as I have seen leopards do on more than one occasion when I have caught them in box traps. They may even appear to welcome any distraction that is offered them, either in the form of food, or in the form of Mr. Gascoyen's periodical visits, but let us not be fooled into imagining that in putting them into cages we are not subjecting them to a terrible and desolating outrage. LLEWELYN POWYS

East Chaldon, Dorset.

HERBERT GLADSTONE

SIR,—May I draw your attention to an injustice done by Mr. Francis Birrell in his review of Sir Charles Mallet's *Herbert Gladstone*, in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION of January 7th?

He refers to the Umtali incident (about which Lord Gladstone consulted my father, W. P. Schreiner, when the outcry was at its loudest), and rightly emphasizes the firm justice shown by the Governor-General, but his words are misleading. He says "All parties in the newly united South Africa united against Gladstone and the flames were fanned by the English press in the best American style. But Herbert emerged as a true Gladstone. The son of the man who made peace after Majuba would not truckle to the Boers on a point of justice." Mr. Birrell should know:—

1. That Umtali is in Rhodesia.
2. That Rhodesia is not part of the Union of South Africa.
3. That the chief clamour came, of course, from the English settlers of Rhodesia.
4. (A minor point) that Dutch South Africans are not spoken of as Boers since England conquered them.

It is unfortunately true that the Dutch here are, on the whole, unjust to the natives, their fellow countrymen, but this deplorable attitude is now widespread amongst all the white races in the Union. A Native Service Contract Bill was passed last year which legalised the flogging of natives by the police, at the request of their farmer employers, and it received the enthusiastic support of English farmers in Natal.

Moreover, in view of recent events in Kenya, it cannot be too

often repeated that England, when she passed the South Africa Act (to create the Union of South Africa) did not safeguard the interests of the native peoples, and is therefore directly responsible for the depressing state of affairs in this country.

St. James, Near Cape Town. LYNDALL GREGG.

LABOUR AND THE RURAL VOTE

SIR,—In your issue of March 4th in your note upon the result of the Rotherham by-election occurs the sentence, "To win a national majority Labour must gain seats in . . . agricultural and residential areas." This is a truism, but it is a result little likely to be achieved until the pundits of the Party cease to regard county divisions as peopled entirely by agricultural workers. In practically every such division an enormous majority of the electorate lives in towns and is quite otherwise engaged. Nevertheless, Labour's agricultural policy is of great importance to them, but alone it is not enough. Nor is ordinary Labour propaganda likely to carry much weight with them. What is needed is an assurance of work for the local unemployed, a development of services and amenities suitable to modern conditions of life, protection from the defilement of antiquated industrial development, adequate housing, and customers for the shopkeeper—in short, a comprehensive policy for all classes and types of worker other than those who live in the great industrial areas.

All this can be found by those who look at various statements of Labour policy, but the average voter will not search a dozen pamphlets, however gay their covers, for the answer to his particular questions. If the Labour Party hopes to win those county divisions—or any of them—at the next election, it is time that they seriously addressed themselves to the framing of a policy to meet their needs. HELEN M. KEYNES

8-49 Roland Gardens, S.W.7.

THE MEERUT APPEAL

SIR,—Will you allow me to thank, through your columns, all those who responded to the appeal I made in my letter of February 11th for donations on behalf of the appeal of Mr. H. L. Hutchinson, one of the Meerut prisoners. They will be glad to know that, largely owing to their generosity, it has been possible to telegraph the first 100 guineas to Meerut. This sum—a part only of what has so far been raised—will allow counsel to be engaged to file the appeal of the Meerut prisoners before the final date, March 16th. It is still hoped to raise the minimum of £1,000 to brief a leading Indian barrister. Further donations should be sent to Mrs. Williams-Ellis, Romney's House, Hollybush Hill, London, N.W.3.

139, New Abercorn Flats, STORM JAMESON
Abercorn Place, N.W.8.

THE TRANSLATORS' GUILD

SIR,—The standard reached by the translations of foreign books published in England is probably as high as in other countries, but it still happens that a careless or inadequate English version spoils the effect of a really valuable foreign book and so helps to revive prejudice against translated works.

There is no shortage in this country of translators who are thoroughly efficient both as linguists and writers of English, and no need, therefore, for a publisher to be satisfied with a makeshift rendering. The failure, when it occurs, is due to lack of contact. The Translators' Guild has been formed to supply this needed link between publishers and translators. Its function is to find for the publisher the right translator, and for the translator the kind of book to which he can do full justice, for even the best translator is handicapped when working on a book which violates his personal feelings and opinions. The Guild hopes to raise the general standard of translations and to save translators and publishers needless trouble and expense.

Membership of the Translators' Guild is open to anyone who can satisfy the Honorary Advisory Committee of his or her ability, linguistic and literary. The following are the members of the Committee, which is representative of both publishers and translators: Mr. Hamish Miles, Mr. F. V. Morley (Messrs. Faber and Faber, Ltd.), Mr. F. Muller (Messrs. Methuen and Co., Ltd.), Mr. Paul Selver, Mr. Cyrus Brooks (Secretary).

Before its formation the Guild was discussed with a number of leading publishers who, almost without exception, have promised it their support, and many well-known translators have already been enrolled as members. Anyone who would like particulars of the Guild's methods and activities is invited to apply to the undersigned. CYRUS BROOKS,

The Translators' Guild, Secretary, The Translators' Guild
188 Piccadilly, W.1.

Miscellany

RICHARD AND MR. GIELGUD

Richard of Bordeaux is a play that prompts description rather than reflection. It has been, is, and is likely to continue to be, one of the most popular spectacles in London. The ingredients of its success are simple: a changing feast for the eye; Mr. John Gielgud's most attractive and arresting acting; a seriousness which is easy to assimilate. It is the sort of play which makes one wish one was a boy again. I could not help thinking how much more I should have enjoyed it at an age when I was so lost in any stage-scene that I never noticed whether dialogue was up to situation, nor, so long as the costumes were in keeping, whether the spirit of the period informed the whole play; when, in short, my imagination was "Shakespearian" with regard to the past, and anachronisms did not bother me. As a matter of fact, the dialogue is very inferior to the dramatist's sense of situation. Mr. Gordon Daviot's conception of a situation is frequently dramatic, but (with the exception of Richard II himself) the words his characters utter never more than indicate with crude emphasis what he intends each of them to stand for. He has learnt a good deal from the methods of *St. Joan*, but he cannot, like Mr. Shaw, make his characters speak out of themselves or utter their minds with real cogency and point. This is particularly noticeable with the patriotic fire-eaters, Gloucester and Arundel, and in the debate on peace and war. Mr. Daviot is after something interesting in the case of "old John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster," but the personality of that powerful nobleman remains not only elusive, which would not matter, but indistinct, which does. Lancaster is civilised enough to prefer his nephew to his son, the future Henry IV—we see that; but though it is obviously he who is steering Richard we never catch sight of his motives. Compare him, for example, with Warwick in *St. Joan* in this respect.

However, the dramatist has *not* failed us as far so the main character, Richard himself, is concerned. It is Richard (though in his relation to his wife he is feebly sentimentalised) who holds the play together. And what is more, Richard's character, as Mr. Daviot has developed it, has the theatrical merit of giving Mr. Gielgud opportunities of acting several men in one part: Richard II, as a generous, wayward, pleasure-loving, peace-loving youth, the victim and beneficiary of an artistic temperament—running in his case too much in the direction of finery and display; Richard II, as the self-indulgent and suspicious King, capable of any duplicity and gradually turning into an erratic tyrant—though tyranny is foreign to his nature; and, lastly, Richard II, pathetic and dignified in his fall.

In Richard's first phase it is easy for an actor to please the majority, provided he has Mr. Gielgud's attractive personality, though the more exacting may be bored by an exhibition of conventional high spirits, temper, tenderness and charm. In the second, and in the third phase, Mr. Gielgud is more certain of pleasing both types of playgoer. Up to the quarrel between Mowbray and Bolingbroke Mr. Gielgud's acting is plausible and graceful. In that scene, and thenceforward, however, Mr. Gielgud was remarkable; he achieved something more striking than a handsome presence and a sympathetic airy carelessness. In the scene we watch a Richard who has tasted blood as an autocrat and rather likes its salt flavour, and in whom the slow poison of suspicion has begun to work. There was a morbid, feline elegance about his bearing and careful movements. His expression had lost its frank gaiety and became foxy—hunted. The handsome youth, only capable

of inspiring either tenderness or contempt, accordingly as he was judged as a companion or as a leader of a country in arms, had changed into a selfish, disillusioned man at bay, though for the moment victoriously at bay. The Richard before our eyes was now a bitter artist who had lost the desire to share delightful things; the affectionate, effusive, festive youth had become one who had no longer faith in friends, but trusted only to "two thousand archers paid regularly every Friday." It was this transformation, imaginatively conceived by the dramatist and imaginatively interpreted by the actor, which animated what would have otherwise been a mere spectacle—true a fine one—and held it together. (The designers both of costumes and scenery, Mr. Motley and Mr. Harry Henby, deserve high praise.) Mr. Gielgud acted Richard in the last phase with admirable restraint, never allowing pathos to sink into lachrymose sentiment, nor the tenderness of Richard's farewell to his page, Maudelyn, to justify that rather unfortunate surname. His aspect and attitudes during the last scene in the cold, high, dusky chamber of the Tower, where Bolingbroke and the Archbishop compelled him to sign his abdication, were striking. To look at once distinguished and crushed, to behave like a tired man of sorrows and yet be savagely ironical, is not an easy task for an actor. Mr. Gielgud triumphed, and with an economy of gesture that excited my admiration. In my opinion he is now the first of English actors. It is far from being an age of great acting, but the range of his emotional scope, and the intelligence with which he conceives his parts, put him right at the top of his profession. He combines the histrionic temperament with interpretative intelligence; that is rare. Now his temptations will begin. He has the power to charm large audiences. Will he choose only plays which delight them? Apart from the character of Richard I think this play a poor one. Miss Gwen ffrangçon-Davies has won praise in her part of Anne of Bohemia, Richard's first queen. She deserves every word of the praise that has been given her; but what an empty little part it is! Anne is only a winning, pretty nonentity, and we are treated to the display of marital relations more than three years old, which are indistinguishable from idealised courtship. Mr. Reyner Barton played the part of the Archbishop well, and Mr. Francis Lister, in the scene in which, as Robert de Vere Earl of Oxford, he has to confess that he ran away in battle, put a degree of unexaggerated miserable emotion that made the scene affecting. As the gay poet-courtier he was given nothing entertaining to say—alas!

DESMOND MACCARTHY

GARDENS

THE art of play, as also, I am inclined to think, the art of life itself, consists mainly in the creation of an environment within which we are of some importance. The consciousness of inferiority which characterises so many people to-day, destroying their peace and driving them helter-skelter into the barbed-wire entanglements of false philosophies, is due very largely to neglect of this first principle. When Adam and Eve were driven by foolish ambition to leave the Garden of Eden for Bloomsbury they made the mistake of their lives. Vain, though understandable, are the gymnosophic affectations of their descendants; for nudity was but a trivial and accidental circumstance of the Paradise they forfeited.

Of all human activities gardening is in the eudemonistic list the soundest of gilt-edged investments. Its dividends are secure, its capital value constant; no liabilities attach to it, nor need its devotees make provision for depreciation. The true gardener can reckon on obtaining from his hobby as generous a yield of pleasure in his old age as in his prime.

I have never known a real gardener who was not a happy man. Gardening, of course, cannot take the place of the more violent stimuli which healthy emotional life occasionally needs. But it forms an ideal background for the life of the emotions and of the intellect. Far more effectively than angling, it serves as the perfect recreation of a contemplative man. But it also exercises or titillates, ever so gently, many of our most constant instinctive urges. In the garden our victories are frequent and satisfying; our defeats are never tragic and rarely final. Solicitude is not too harrowing; curiosity and interest are agreeably provoked. The gardener develops a real attachment to his plants; and the more he cares about them, the more he wants to know about them—about their special difficulties and their special likings; the soil and the situation that best suit them; their peculiar ways and characters; when and how they push their way through the earth in the spring; the purpose of their several forms and colours; how they gather and store their energy, and how they vary from season to season. It is its daily, its hourly variety that make up much of the garden's charm and interest. There is always something fresh to see, and always something fresh that needs doing. It is useless to ask the gardener what is the good of it. Aren't there just as beautiful flowers, just as interesting plants, in the hedgerows, in the meadows, and on the moors as in any garden? Of course there are; but what of it? There are probably just as nice people in the world as are my dearest friends. Certainly there are better books than I shall ever write and finer pictures than you will ever paint, as well as nobler lives than you or I will ever lead.

There are all sorts of gardens, and as many sorts of gardeners. So long as the former yield and the latter gather pleasure, neither need other justification. The kind of gardening that interests me is not very common, though it has always had its devotees. I have never been able to look upon plants or their flowers as just so many bits of colour, or of scent, or even of shape. They are living things, and therefore ends in themselves. Gardening seems to me far removed from the fine arts; and I would nearly as soon choose a wife to match my furniture as a plant to fit in with some decorative scheme.

Fifty years ago appeared a very important book, William Robinson's *The English Flower Garden*. It has become one of the great classics of gardening, and a fifteenth edition has just been published.* No one who cares for the hardy plants that thrive in our climate can afford to be without it. It has, more than any other recent book, changed the aspect of English gardens. Its author set out to fight the gardening fashion of that day, typified by the strange perversion known as "carpet-bedding." In this "aberration of the human mind," as William Morris called it, Robinson saw but a degradation of the beautiful forms of flowers "to crude colour." "You may see as good sights many times in tarts," as Bacon said. Nor did Robinson exaggerate when he said that, at the time in which he wrote, beautiful gardens were rare. "Gardens round country houses, instead of forming, as they might, graceful foregrounds to the good landscape views, disfigure all." His theorisings on the nature and principles of art are far from sound; but his instinct in relation to plants and gardens never errs. Although it is not consciously the companionship and gratitude of individual well-cared-for plants that he seeks; and, although, from my point of view, he is a little obsessed by decorative conventions, all his practical instructions are such as tend to promote plant health and to develop plant individuality.

Eleven years before the first edition of *The English Flower Garden* appeared was published a remarkable volume called *Flowers and Gardens: Notes on Plant Beauty*. By a Medical Man. The book is comparatively little known, but I regard it as one of the finest and one of the wisest works in the literature of the garden. The young author, Dr. Forbes Watson (who, by the way, finished this book on his death-bed—the last sentence of his preface being: "These papers are left in charge of a friend for publication"), devotes one of his chapters to a discussion of certain "faults in gardening," in the course of which he urges that a garden should be governed, as Solon said a country should be governed, in such a way that "an injury done to the meanest subject is an insult to the whole community"; "and," he continues, "half the charm of the

* *The English Flower Garden.* By WILLIAM ROBINSON. Murray. 18s.

old-fashioned garden lies in that look of happy rest among the plants, each of which seems to say, " All plant life is sacred when admitted here." He contrasts this with the modern garden, " with its look of stir and change ; here to-day and gone to-morrow."

As a practical handbook, Mr. Robinson's work covers the entire range of hardy flower gardening. Nearly every flowering plant that thrives in the open air of this country, and is worth cultivating, is described, and all necessary advice as to its care is concisely given. *Epilobium*, *Epimedium*, *Epipactis*, *Equisetum*, *Eragrostis*, *Eranthis*, *Erimurus*, and so on, from A to Z, are discussed, with valuable and significant comments and hints as to the most beautiful species of each genus. Then we have chapters on the Wild Garden ; on Flowering Shrubs and Trees ; on Water Gardens and the Bog Garden ; on Evergreens ; on Fragrant Plants ; on Alpine and Wall Gardens ; on the Flower Garden in Winter, and on Lawns and Orchards. There is no other modern book like it. It is eminently personal ; and, accordingly, displays preferences and prejudices which not all readers, although in general agreement with the author, will share. That makes the book none the less valuable. It only indicates that it is alive. HARRY ROBERTS

MOZART AT SADLER'S WELLS

I RECOMMEND everybody to go and hear the present production of Mozart's opera *Cosi fan Tutte* at Sadler's Wells Theatre, where excellent seats can be obtained at from one shilling and threepence to six shillings. There has been a great improvement during the past year or two in the standard of performances of opera at Sadler's Wells and the Old Vic theatres, and the present production of *Cosi fan Tutte* is admirable in every respect and will give pleasure to the most exacting lover of Mozart.

In the first place the orchestra is larger and greatly improved in quality since the old days. The performance I heard last Saturday afternoon was conducted by Warwick Braithwaite—whose name I do not remember having seen before—and it was something more than competent. The whole performance was tightly held together rhythmically, the orchestral playing was keen and alive, and the conductor showed that he had a proper sense of the various beauties of Mozart's wonderful score, which is so subtle and diverse in expression as to be a source of constant astonishment. The opera was produced by Clive Carey, and both acting and singing were commendably free from that exaggeration and over-emphasis which can so easily cheapen and spoil this opera, being utterly out of keeping with the spirit of Mozart's music, which is fine and delicate even when it is exhilaratingly comic. Joan Cross and Winifred Kennard were the two ladies, Fiordiligi and Dorabella, pledged to Guglielmo (Sumner Austin) and Ferrando (Henry Wendon), who so soon forswore their loves for the two dazzling foreigners who are their old lovers in disguise. The cynic philosopher, Don Alfonso (Arnold Matters) and the maid, Despina (Nora Sabini), gave on the whole the most even and satisfactory performances, although Miss Joan Cross was exceptionally good in her distracted scenes in the second Act, and here, too, Mr. Henry Wendon put a fervour and conviction into his pleading which was just right. *Cosi fan Tutte* is full of magnificent ensembles, and these were admirably played and sung so that one left the theatre after the performance in a state of satisfaction at having this vastly improved and I hope improving permanent opera company in London. What was chiefly pleasing was to find that the whole opera was approached in the right spirit by the conductor, the producer, and the musicians and singers, that is a spirit of whole-hearted zest and concentration with a proper sense of proportion. There was nothing slack or flabby or tired, and no flashy tricks from beginning to end, and this production deserves praise and appreciation commensurate with the enjoyment which it gives.

It is astonishing how much nonsense has been written about *Cosi fan Tutte*, which was the last opera Mozart composed in collaboration with his best librettist, Lorenzo da Ponte, who was also responsible for *Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*. It is commonly agreed nowadays that *Figaro* and *Don Giovanni* are masterpieces as librettos, but *Cosi fan Tutte* has had to endure a great deal of unintelligent censure. The two supposedly damning charges against the libretto of *Cosi fan Tutte* are those of " frivolity " and " improbability." Innumerable critics since the first appearance of this opera have made these accusations, and when these critics have been warm admirers of Mozart as a composer they have tried to explain his collaboration as a necessity forced upon him by circumstances—the opera having been commissioned by the Emperor Joseph after the successful revival of *Figaro* in Vienna in 1789, when it was performed twelve times between August 29th and November 27th. We need not be astonished at the lack of mental freedom which such criticism implies. Even a great man like Beethoven did not apparently understand how Mozart could be interested in setting to music the librettos of *Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*. It is as if Milton could not understand how Shakespeare could have created the characters of Falstaff and Malvolio. It is certainly true that Mozart had a freer mind, a mind less narrowed and petrified by prejudice, convention, and those stereotyped ideas which pass muster for the majority in every age as " moral," than any other operatic composer and nobody but an unmusical ass could think after hearing *Cosi fan Tutte* that Mozart disliked the libretto or was only compelled by necessity to compose the music for it. Whether it was reprehensible or not in him to have this all-embracing human sympathy which made it possible for him to create a Don Giovanni, a Leporello, a Figaro, and to participate imaginatively so completely in all the characters, minor and major, of his operas as to give an authentic and convincing utterance to each one of them is another question.

Cosi fan Tutte may provide some sort of answer to this. Fortunately, we possess an excellent translation of da Ponte's witty and amusing original in the well-known version of the Rev. Marmaduke Browne, which is the one used at Sadler's Wells, so that all who go to hear the opera may judge for themselves. I am of the opinion that in some respects this libretto is more calculated to show the unique character of Mozart's genius than that of any other of his operas. There was no opera before at all like *Cosi fan Tutte* in the history of music, and we have to wait until Verdi's *Falstaff* before we get a work that can be compared with it. *Figaro* belongs to a definite type of comic opera, the type of Rossini's *Barbiere di Siviglia*—that is to say it is essentially human and deals, like all good comedy, with the average man and woman of daily life in all their amazing variety and vitality. No doubt this was da Ponte's intention, too, in *Cosi fan Tutte*, but da Ponte was a Jew, and when a Jew is gifted extraordinary things may happen, and it happened somehow that in taking a plot that could not happen in real life (and so far the charge of improbability is justified though it implies misunderstanding, as we shall see) da Ponte gave Mozart his chance to compose an opera that is purely abstract and transcendental. It is a visionary world that we regard when we see these puppets of *Cosi fan Tutte*, for they are pure abstractions and not human at all in the sense that Figaro and Leporello are human characters. When Mozart as a child first learned that there was such a thing as number and scrawled figures all over the walls of the room in his father's house he was obeying some instinct connected with his genius for music. If you listen to the miraculous score of *Cosi fan Tutte* you will become aware that something analogous to the scribbling of those mysterious hieroglyphs is taking place, but here it is not the undirected scribbling of a child but the beautifully formal patterning of a musical genius which is somehow significant of all those vague, fugitive sensations and emotions of human beings which normally find no outlet, the form of expression not being such as will fit into any recognisable framework.

It is in the second Act that this becomes unmistakably clear, because here we move in a region where the most delicate aspirations and sensations of the heart are in conflict. If the conflict were actual we should at once be brought down to a coarser reality where some sort of transformation into baser substance would necessarily take place, but as it is all an artistic

hypothesis, an incursion into the imagination and not into time and place with a real woman named Fiordiligi, and two real and different lovers, one in her presence and one absent, we can move where Mozart moved freely with the tenderness, the inspiration and the form-creating speed of genius. And when I say form-creating I am referring to these musical structures which in the second Act especially fill the air with their strange and unanalysable beauty. W. J. TURNER

PLAYS AND PICTURES

Tragic Waters

Too many theatrical notices have begun with " I despair of the London theatre if . . ." for me to start this with these words, strong as the temptation is. What must be said is that if some manager does not produce Miss Dorothy Massingham's *The Lake*, just played at the Arts Theatre, he will miss the chance of putting on one of the strongest and sincerest plays seen in London for years, and one full of fine acting. *The Lake* is a study in possession and self-possession. Mrs. Surredge possesses—and is possessed by —things, two of which are her husband and her daughter, Stella. Stella, whose tragedy we see, is struggling to some kind of self-expression. In the first act her struggles are merely capricious, petty vehemences, a silly love-affair but with some self-contempt, which makes us hopeful. Her lover is possessed by his wife's fortune, and will not give up anything for love. Stella decides to marry John Clayne, and when he is killed on the wedding day, just after the ceremony, she is bewildered and broken. During the six months of their engagement Stella has grown to love him passionately—and now there is nothing left. In the last act Miss Massingham preserves the note of tragedy—mixed with a fine and terrible humour—when the discarded, dishonourable lover scampers back so that Stella can realise how utterly remote is that trivial past of hers : but the play ends on a note of hope and assurance, and is much more lifelike than it might have been had Stella gone out to kill herself. Without yielding anything to sentimentality, Miss Massingham has the courage to give us a play in which love is shown as a redeeming power. Here is a play, finer, richer, and with far greater dramatic possibilities than was *Musical Chairs*. The main acting honours go to Dame May Whitty, whose Mrs. Surredge was an exquisite essay in keeping a part true as a spirit-level ; to Marie Ney, whose Stella made even her discontent in the first act not unsympathetic ; and to Esmé Church, who, as Stella's aunt, acted with a restrained intensity which brought rare beauty on to the stage. The scene in the last act, where she dissuades Stella from suicide, had in it fire, and control, so superb that moments of it gave me enjoyment I have scarcely known save in a play of Ibsen's.

Francis Thompson.

When an unusual event has occurred, and a dramatist decides to make a play of it, his first duty is to show how and why it might have happened. By this criterion *Francis Thompson*, which on its popular appeal should enjoy a new lease of life when the " Q " Theatre has done with it, is a failure. If one were not aware that the poet had actually been rescued and befriended by a prostitute who left him when his need for her had gone, this play would be dismissed, as it stands, as sentimental drama. The facts are there, and a conventionalised picture of a poet. But no window is opened, and the probabilities are no nearer for the author's handling. Mr. Ernest Milton, though he plays sensitively and with a strong inward dignity, reveals no lovable trait which might have appealed to poor Ann beyond his picturesqueness and his genius, and neither of these is sufficient to account for the sustained loyalty of her devotion. Even Thompson's shyness becomes translated into an almost feminine primness, and drugs make him histrionic but not possessed. Miss Mary Glynne sheds nearly all trace of a good upbringing and provides some delicate pathos, but she misses the cue of thwarted motherhood which is Ann's natural explanation. The play affords a wealth of opportunities for type-playing to a large cast, of which Miss Dorice Fordred, Mr. Hay Petrie and Miss May Agate are excellent.

Chauve Souris

It is sadly to be acknowledged that the trick of tenuous beauty, supplemented by an even more tenuous wit, with which M. Balieff started and delighted London some years back, is not wearing so well as one had anticipated. The enchantments are as little perfunctory, the novelty not quite so new, and the quaintness something too consistent. There are longueurs in the new *Chauve Souris* programme at the Vaudeville which even the most charming of accents cannot disguise, and it may be considered a portent that by far the most successful scene is that old favourite *The King Orders the Drums to be Beaten*. With some misgivings we may congratulate the company on its acquisition of that fine romanticist, M. Boris Ranevsky, whose sentimental reverie from Tourgeniev is most improbably moving. But these little tit-bits give him no scope to show his real capabilities, and with the rest of the company one has an uneasy feeling that within a quarter of an hour they have really nothing more to show us. An exception is Mlle. Komisarjevska, who gives an impudent sparkle to an otherwise unsurprising song-sketch called *I. S. Cohn, Ltd.* M. Balieff, as usual, creates his atmosphere of amiable interest with a handful of nuances which still maintain intact his reputation as the prince of compères. But the evening would be the richer for some robust relief to all the delicacy ; whereas the only alternative was the barbarous boredom of " Surgeon."

Fairly Jolly Roger

The trouble with *Jolly Roger*, the new " musical burlesque " at the Savoy, is that it is not nearly burlesque enough. Judged by Gilbert and Sullivan standards there may be the prescribed ingredients of burlesque and romance, but if so, then the standards apply only to Gilbert and Sullivan. The romance is wishy-washy and does not even act as a foil. On the side of comedy there is a good deal of the " stap-me-vitals " and " split-me-windpipe " sort of thing, but, apart from what Mr. George Robey supplies, no real humour. Then there is not really enough of Mr. Robey. If he is there at all one wants him in large doses, but it is a blessing that no attempt has been made to fit him in. The music, in parts, is excellent ; but the composer, Mr. Walter Leigh, is at his best when he is not being too serious and romantic. Mr. Gavin Gordon sings with intelligence and acts with gusto ; and it is a delight to watch Miss Sarah Allgood, even though she is deliberately misapplying her talents. The scenery is nice and the costumes are pretty, and the whole show lives up to its name and is quite jolly and, with the reservations that have been made, these rather distressing adjectives describe it only too well.

THE COMING WEEK

FRIDAY, March 10th—
" La Souris," Arts Theatre (matinée).
Léner Quartet, Queen's Hall, 8.15.
Busch Quartet, Wigmore Hall, 8.30.

SATURDAY, March 11th—
Robert Mayer Concert for Children, Central Hall, Westminster, 11.
Royal Choral Society, Albert Hall, 2.30.
Busch Quartet, Wigmore Hall, 3.
Marx Exhibition, organised by National Council of Labour Colleges. Recital of Revolutionary Poems by Miss Moyna Macgill, Transport House, Smith Square, 8. And on March 12.
" Oliver Twist," Lyceum Theatre.
Mr. Matsuoka and Mr. Quo Tai-Chi on "Manchuria." B.B.C., 9.20.

SUNDAY, March 12th—
Prof. J. C. Flugel on " The Myth of the Golden Age," Conway Hall, 11.
Film Society, Tivoli, 2.30.
Cortot. Palladium, 3.15.
Paul Scheffer on " The Crisis in Germany," Willoughby Hall, 1, Willoughby Road, Hampstead, 7.30.

MONDAY, March 13th—
London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Albert Coates, Queen's Hall, 8.15.
" All God's Chillun' got Wings," Embassy Theatre.

TUESDAY, March 14th—
F. G. Pratt on " The Military Burden on India," Friends House, Euston Road, 1.20.
Dean of St. Paul's on " Religion, Science and Philosophy," University College, Gower Street, 8.15.

WEDNESDAY, March 15th—
B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Adrian Boult, Queen's Hall, 8.15.
" Q.E.D." Phoenix Theatre.
" Cecilia," Arts Theatre.

THURSDAY, March 16th—
Sir Norman Angell, C. E. M. Joad, and others on " War Danger and World Crisis." Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, 8.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

ONCE, as the guest of a club of women writers, I heard a certain Dean condescend to justify the novelist's art by describing it, in other words, as the opium of the people. Thousands of clerks and typists and shop-girls, he explained with satisfaction, drugged themselves on their way to and from work and in all their spare moments, with the rosy pre-digested day-dreams which we, the assembled novelists, had written, and so long as we kept them suitably supplied they would never rebel against the conditions of their lives. We gave them, he said, their only touches of colour and romance; we provided a dream world which almost blinded them to the drabness and ugliness of existence. He sat down amid the plaudits and smirks of a roomful of men and women who felt themselves complimented at having been told that they were helping to perpetuate an abominable state of affairs and that they were the chosen guardians of poverty, ill-health and ugliness; that there were tens of thousands of human beings so utterly degraded, leading such nightmarish existences, that they had to read their washy novels as a narcotic in order to make life endurable. In such language did I paraphrase what I had heard while I bent my blackest looks on the celebrated cleric. I did not easily get over my indignation, yet I had to admit there was a lot of truth in what he had said: it is easy for art, like wine, to be not a richness and grace added to life, but a refuge from it. We often distract our minds with a book if we cannot afford whisky; we read in order to empty our tired minds instead of to fill them. What infuriated me was that the speaker had thought that such a despicable use of literature was wholly for the good: he might as well have praised drink, saying the quality did not matter so long as it made men insensible. Of course, it is true that a book may be a great relief when life becomes unbearable—but a great book is more of an escape than a silly one. *Tristram Shandy* will lighten the hours of anxiety while one waits listening to the nurse moving about the sick-bed in the next room, better than any volume of the Heartsease Library. But it is not a drug: it is reminder of the world one loves. So one may look out of the window of a room in which a dead body is lying and notice the sunlight racing between the clouds over the hill.

* * *

There are, however, moments when one wants to take no trouble at all: when the strain of feeling any strong, genuine emotion is too great: when malted milk, or soda water and a cracknel, seems preferable to the greatest vintages and the most consummate cooking. At such moments when great literature is beyond us and bad literature is even more nauseous than usual, there is a great deal to be said for skipping back two generations or so and turning to sporting books. It is just the right moment to read Surtees and to recuperate in the delightful surroundings of vociferous fox-hunting squires, spreading mammas and their succulent, well-rounded daughters. Somehow or other the bustle of the meet and a run with the hounds is marvellously refreshing. And without giving themselves airs as artists, these fox-hunters, from Trollope to Sassoon, always write so well. "There is something of poetry in every man who rides hard across a country," says Whyte-Melville after describing the languid but heroic figure of the Honourable Crasher reading the *Idylls of the King* in the train to Market Harborough. That is perhaps going a little far, but for some reason fox-hunting is one of the subjects which men of action write well about. Whyte-Melville, whose *Complete Works* are being republished by *Country Life* (6s. a volume), is one of the best of them; as one reads him, all is peace save that a breath of envy stirs the heart as softly as the light wind ruffles the cowslips that dot the spring pastures in May. Reading Whyte-Melville you step into a world of innocency which few of us have ever known. And because he is so innocent this dashing Etonian guardsman, this superb rider to hounds, who was killed late in the 'seventies, in the Vale of the White Horse, is astonishingly restful.

* * *

Kate Coventry is what a young guardsman would have liked a girl to be. She is full of spirit, and has a very good time, goes to Ascot unchaperoned, and is altogether very fast indeed. Thus to pique her lovers she will sit beside the leering old baronet on the box, take over the ribbons of his four-in-hand, and even smoke one of his cigars. Such conduct, which disgusts both the steady hero and the unprincipled villain who flirts with her, is condoned by the author, who likes a thoroughbred filly to indulge in larks and romps and lash out at a groom with her forefoot. In *Katerfelto* Whyte-Melville attempts to write another *Lorna Doone*, and the result is not very successful. There is a duel, a gypsy girl, Jacobites, a highway robbery, a grey stallion fleeter than any in the land, a price on John Garnet's head, and a stag-hunt over Exmoor. Yet the extreme silliness outweighs the charm, and it is difficult to connect such a book with the author of *Market Harborough*. For the distinguishing quality of the latter book is that he knows every inch of the country: he knows the people, and he knows their limitations or unsoundness as well as he does that of the horses which they ride. The Hon. Charles Lambton remarked in the course of *Men and Horses I Have Known*, that at one time he had moved in a set "who were as interesting as the horses they rode." In *Market Harborough* Whyte-Melville is content with less exceptional people, but the story—of a cautious, shy, and rather determined man who comes to hunt for a season in Leicestershire—is an admirable one, and we do meet some real heroes.

> "If you've got a green horse as you're not very confident on at strong timber," said Mr. Trotter, about the fourth glass of brandy and water, "you tackle him *my* way. You take him out on Sundays, or any afternoon as you've nothing particular to do, and pick him out some real *stiff* ones. Give him two or three *good heavy falls* and I'll warrant you'll have very little trouble afterwards. That's the way to make 'em *rise!*"

But it is in his real love of nature and his wonderful power of describing the characters of horses that Whyte-Melville reveals his greatest gifts.

> The scared sheep scour off for a few paces, shaking their woolly coats and then turn round to gaze at us as we fleet from field to field. A couple of magpies, after a succession of jerks and bows, while they make up their minds, dive rapidly away over the hedge to our *right*; a direction, for we confess the superstition, ominous of sport. A scarlet coat glances along the lane in front; and as this is the last bit of grass, and moreover the furrows lie the right way, we catch hold of the sweetest's head and treat ourselves to a gallop.

Riding Recollections is better still; its only fault as a book is that it makes one long for the society of horses; long to ride and long to have the nerve and the pluck to risk breaking one's neck over every conceivable obstacle—and to do that for five days a week all one's life.

> I remember seeing the Reverend John Bower, an extraordinarily fine rider of the last generation, hand his horse over an ugly iron-bound stile, on to some stepping stones with a drop of six or seven feet into a Leicestershire lane, as calmly as if the animal had been a lady whom he was taking out for a walk. . . . I can still recall as if I had seen it yesterday, the curve of neck and quarters as, gently mouthing the bit, that well-broken hunter poised lightly for its spring, and landing in the same collected form, picked its way daintily, step by step, down the declivity like a cat. Nobody followed him and I think the attempt was better left alone.

* * *

The death of T. Earle Welby ("Stet" of *The Week-End Review*) is a real loss to scholarship and criticism. His last book, *The Cellar Key* (Gollancz, 6s.), is a serious little primer which goes about its business scientifically and contains more things worth knowing about wine than any book I have come across. There is not the slightest gush, but the whole is pervaded by a most delightful warm geniality and urbane sunniness of temper which must have been characteristic of the author. If you really want to *know* something about wine this is the book to read.

MERCURY PATTEN

SHORT STORIES

The Short Stories of Michael Arlen. *Collins.* 7s. 6d.

Vagabond Flag. Sixteen Tales by ESSEX BROOKE. *Cape.* 7s. 6d.

Outside Eden. By J. C. SQUIRE. *Heinemann.* 7s. 6d.

Full Score. Twenty-five Stories selected by FYTTON ARMSTRONG. *Rich and Cowan.* 7s. 6d.

The Near East is a nursery of sensitive souls. In the work of almost every Jewish artist, and of many artists who have a strain of Jewish blood—Proust, of course, is the conspicuous example—we find the same yearning for human sympathy, the same acuteness, the same tendency to masochism. Now Armenia has entered the literary field; Mr. Michael Arlen prefaces his collected tales with a long discursion upon his personal and literary origins that makes the latter part of the volume look poor and shoddy. It is so obviously, indeed quite painfully, sincere. There he stands, a young Armenian with an awkward name, as yet still diffident and undistinguished, the great world of the gossip-column all before him. Mount Ararat looms forbiddingly in the racial background; and as we learn from a fragment of thinly disguised autobiography—*The Confessions of a Naturalised Englishman*—there was a time when he considered writing the history of the Armenian race and giving up what Priscilla called "flash stories." But the current of destiny proved too powerful; his ark grounded not on Ararat but in Berkeley Square.

It was a Berkeley Square, it must be admitted, of his own creation. London, as described by Mr. Arlen, is neither a London that actually exists, nor is it a symbolic fantasy on a real theme. He calls it London, but it might equally well be Cairo; his English characters are so distinctively un-British that even his guardsmen bear a strong resemblance to janissaries, while his peerage—Lord Tarlyon and the rest—are as exotic as any Caliph from an Arabian fairy tale. Their surroundings have the lush romanticism of the fabled opium-vision. The drug to which Mr. Arlen owes his effects—rich interiors, sparkling and snapping with wit and gaiety, sonorous streets where strolling noblemen smoke their cigars, exchanging a brilliant paradox for every lamp-post—comes from a poppy-head that grows strongest in the Eastern mind. Under its influence, the flash tales that Priscilla deplored are reeled off with preternatural speed and fluency.

Not so Miss Brooke's collection of stories; one feels that the sixteen narratives in *Vagabond Flag* have been spun with care and forethought from the author's experience and are wholly innocent of a desire to impress or shock. They are the first-fruits of conscientious observation; a young schoolmistress is in trouble with an unruly class; the vicar's family entertains a visiting clergyman; a girl goes to stay with her future parents-in-law. Here and there, the style is a little *jejeune*; some of the stories, particularly the last mentioned, seem a trifle overcrowded in the telling by bits and odds and ends of decorative detail, chintz curtains, bowls of flowers and the like. Elsewhere, the narrow outlines of the situation are filled in by Miss Brooke with considerable neatness.

"Stories" hardly describes Mr. Squire's book. He does not so much tell us stories as provide us with a series of *divertissements*, many of them highly ingenious in their own way. For example, there is *Professor Gubbitt's Revolution;* a devout Baconian, from an American university, claims to have dug up in Gorhambury Park a leaden casket containing a play by Bacon-Shakespeare, as well as a document in Bacon's handwriting to prove his authorship. Mr. Squire makes the most of this hypothesis; not only have we the dicta of famous contemporaries: "Sure there must be some terrible mistake somewhere"—*Mr. John Galsworthy.* "Our King shall never be discrowned"—*Mr. John Masefield*—but he reconstructs the flaming article by a successful journalist, with which the popular press rallies to Shakespeare's support:

> A fig for this American professor. A fig for all professors. . . . He shall not rob us of our Shakespeare. Shakespeare is ours, of the flesh and bone and fibre of us. The Swan of Avon was never miraculously hatched to be the plaything of professors or the prey of pedants. He is as English as the English sun, he is as English as the English rain. He is as Celtic as the mist and as Saxon as the soil. . . . I tell this American professor, I tell all the Americans and all the professors, that though they may take the shirt off our backs they shall not take our Shakespeare. He is the glory of our manhood. He is the pride of our womanhood. He is the brightest star in Britain's crown. He is as English as the bluebells in the English brakes. . . .

—Mr. Douglas himself, in his Ercles vein, could scarcely be expected to do better.

Full Score is a rather disappointing volume. These stories by authors living and dead—they range from Lafcadio Hearn to Louis Golding—are so diverse in character and method that the general impression they produce is somewhat patchy. Here are fine-drawn and introspective chronicles, a study of madness by Mrs. Malachi Whitaker, ghost-stories, dreams and reminiscences, assembled without any apparent plan. PETER QUENNELL.

A LAPSE INTO BARBARISM

Town and Countryside. By THOMAS SHARP. *Oxford University Press.* 15s.

A mere fluttering over of the pages and a cursory sampling of a passage here and there, instantly revealed *Town and Countryside* to me as a book of the right kind; an excellent and almost a familiar book, for did I not write it myself (more or less) some five years ago under the title of *England and the Octopus?* That certainly was my first flattering impression, further encouraged by the discovery of a photograph of my own taking, and therefore something of a rarity.

However, of the two, Mr. Sharp's is by far the nobler volume (as well it might be at three times the price), and he makes such good use of his larger canvas that one would wish it bigger yet.

Naturally I find myself quite peculiarly in agreement with most of what Mr. Sharp has written, only questioning his arguments indeed where the striking coincidence between the two books occasionally breaks down, as—particularly—over garden cities and the merits of democracy. For coincidence and no more it clearly is, as, seeking for acknowledgment under the letter W in the index, I could only discover the laudable names of Walpole, Horace; Wordsworth, William; and Wren, Sir Christopher.

Therefore I must congratulate a fellow champion of Amenity on having had the luck to grasp what I hold to be the right end of the Rural England stick where it was still warm from my own no less indignantly feverish hand. The grip is an effective one, and Mr. Sharp's dexterity and heavy scoring will, I hope, confirm its popularity. The argument of the book may be summed up by two paragraphs on its first page.

> The last two decades have been remarkable for more catastrophes than the Great War and the depressed peace which we generally believe will constitute their chief claims to memory. It is as likely as not that they will in the future be as memorable for the damage they wrought on the English countryside as for those other violent and personal tragedies.
>
> To-day the Victorian era is not so much memorable for its prosperity and Empire-building as it is for the legacy of sordid and ugly towns

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that it left us. We curse the blind callousness of the men who created those towns, and we creep out of them into the country—which we, in our turn, destroy with an equal blindness. Regretting the beauty that *might* have been in the town, we destroy that which *is* in the country.

It was probably less than a century ago—in my own father's youth—that England reached the brief zenith of her loveliness, the marvellous constructive work and brilliantly inspired planting of the eighteenth century had reached its mellow maturity, and the yet vaster *de*-structive activities of the industrial revolution had barely begun. Writing so late as 1785 this is the picture that Horace Walpole gives of England :

> So many men of all ranks devoted themselves to the new improvements that it is surprising how much beauty has been struck out, with how few absurdities. In the meantime, how rich, how gay, how picturesque the face of the country ! Every journey is made through a succession of pictures ; and even where taste is wanting in the spot improved, the general view is embellished by variety. No lapse to barbarism, formality and seclusion is made, what landscapes will dignify every quarter of our isle when the daily plantations that are making have attained veritable maturity !

What a country ! Unique in the world and in all time, and what have we done with it ? It is not merely going, *it has gone*.

I will give you *my* " English landscape " : A sixty-foot reinforced concrete motorway beyond the kerbs of which were heaps of broken asphalt littering the weed-grown waste, from which rose gigantic black telegraph posts and electric power pylons of latticed steel. A few yards from a common's end stood a shed of corrugated iron that a score of eye-splitting signs, in crude enamels, proclaimed to be a garage. Opposite stood a flimsy bungalow with pink asbestos roof and a gimcrack verandah enclosed with coloured glass announcing that it was " The Lucky Dip Café." Beyond lay an honest turnip field, but lest its valuable road-frontage should be wasted it was partly obscured by three enormous notice boards.

The beech grove that used to shade the road on the other side has been felled for firewood and has not been replanted, though the now dismal acre cannot strictly speaking be said to be without timber, as a large hoarding of Baltic deal, advertising an American serial, has replaced our native trees.

Grim but true. True of so much of our once demi-paradise, now demi-dustbin, that the slogan " Travel Underground " has become irresistible with its promise of unravished darkness.

The author has a particular and reasonable down on chicken farms with their slatternly " pigmy urbanness," and an equal though less reasonable (as it seems to me) dislike of Garden Cities " and all that." As the father of it all, he has no love for Mr. Ebenezer Howard, the revered of most town planners :— " Howard's new hope, new life, new civilisation, ' Town-Country,' is a hermaphrodite ; sterile, imbecile, a monster ; abhorrent and loathsome to the Nature which he worships." Mr. Sharp, you will observe, is a good hater.

He insists, quite rightly, on the essential " separateness " of Town and Country, and he deplores the vague and planless uncertainty whereby this proper antithesis is blurred and broken down so that you do not know whether you are living in semi-suburbanised country or thinned-out mitigated town.

Some of us are still unrealistic enough to think of the word " town " as representing some such background as provided by the older parts of Bath or Cheltenham or Edinburgh or Shrewsbury—something compact, unified, impressive and urbane, and not the sprawling welter of meanness that forms all but a tiny fraction of Urban England. Now we have even come, so it seems, to feel uneasy in the presence of magnanimity and a reminder of true urbanity such as Carlton House Terrace puts us out of countenance. Was it not D. H. Lawrence who said bitterly somewhere, " As the makers of cities the English are more ignominious than rabbits " ?

Mr. Sharp suggests that we, the most over-nice people in the world, having made our towns as we now see them, have invented the excusing lie that we never cared for them. The truth is that we have cared for vested interests more. He sees distorted individualism and romanticism as the root cause of our urban decay as town builders. The debasement of our old urban technique and its gradual replacement by an attempted but futile rusticity, and he questions whether our civilisation is not sinking into a sort of senile decay, returning in its dotage to the intellectual standards of its infancy.

In the end Mr. Sharp asks two questions : (1) Can we ever again attain the unity of outlook which will enable us, uncontrolled, to create beauty in town and countryside ? and (2) Can we hope that the control from authority which seems a settled part of modern democracy can ever become enlightened ?

His own answers to both questions on the last page appear to be in the negative where, after postulating some sort of a dictatorship he sums up as follows :

> But whatever central controlling Board it is, and whatever local controlling agencies they are, they will have to be more enlightened than the present governmental departments and the local authorities if they are to preserve for dull democracy that rural beauty which was created by enlightened autocracy.

Truly, to arrive at such a conclusion after so thorough and penetrating an analysis is not encouraging, but those of us who have seen what Mr. Sharp has seen and know what he knows must share his pessimism. Perhaps only by following up the political implications of his researches could the author have left us with any feeling of ultimate hope.

CLOUGH WILLIAMS-ELLIS

THE NOBLE ANIMAL

Southern Cross to Pole Star. By A. F. TSCHIFFELY. *Heinemann.* 15s.

Reading in Mr. Cunninghame Graham's last book a summary of Tschiffely's now celebrated journey with Argentine horses from Buenos Aires to New York, one remarked that Mr. Tschiffely could travel, but asked apprehensively, could he write ? The answer is that he is one of the few of the contemporary world's many stunt-performers and record-breakers who can. The journey flows as naturally out of his pen as it flowed into his life. He is that rare being, the phlegmatic, simple, drily humorous soul who neither misses anything nor devours too much, whose mind digests what faces it and does not, in what Mr. Guedalla has called the most adjectival of continents, run to adjectives. His book belongs to that uncommon class of which the Czech Werzl's *Thirty Years in the Golden North* is the nearest modern representative, and which is as original as it is high.

Much of the credit for the delightful ease, economy and unemphatic sanity of Tschiffely's narrative must go to Mancha and Gato, his two Criollo bred horses whose nobility and intelligence so capture the imagination that one's pleasure and awe grow with every step they take. They seem no longer horses but gods before the tale ends, and their feat must be unique. The Spanish potter's donkey that has come by road from Seville to Paris is a remarkable beast and no one has celebrated it, but Mancha and Gato are now the lords of the long-distance travellers. If South American enthusiasm mentions them in the same breath as Bolivar we may forgive.

Their influence on Tschiffely is manifest. A man who in a journey which takes two and a half years has his eye on two horses has no time for adjectives. The route lay across the Argentine pampas into Bolivia, over the Andes into Peru. After crossing the Peruvian desert there were the heights and hothouse swamps of Colombia ; from the coast to Panama there was a brief transit in a ship to avoid impossible country, and once again the ride began through San Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico into the United States. During most of this time Tschiffely was alone. An enthusiastic Englishman who accompanied him in Peru and continually reproved him for his bad language and for eating raw onions, retired after a few weeks more or less dead. Tschiffely, more anxious about fodder and poisoned grasses, and long inured to the withering Andean winds and malarial tropics, escaped pretty lightly, except for a nasty turn of blood poisoning which was healed by an Indian medicine man.

Tschiffely is obviously a sensible man. It is encouraging to think that the traveller does not want to meet bandits, does not want to shoot to preserve his sacred honour, and keeps out of trouble generally. The customary South American traveller rarely gives this soothing impression. Tschiffely, on the contrary, makes no bones about discretion being the better part of musketry valour, and although there are two or three nasty passages, he gets out of them as quickly as possible. In a book in which he draws his revolver only once, he dismisses the memory with proper displeasure and brevity.

> Near here occurred an incident that obliged me to shoot in self-defence. An intoxicated negro insulted me, and finally attacked me with his *machete*.

A second nasty passage occurred after crossing the Rio Santo. The crossing in itself was a frightening business—the swimming of rivers or the crossing of them by giddy rope bridges which swayed like pendulums was of course an everyday matter—for the river was a roaring flood. I had followed Mancha and Gato hitherto with absorption, but I did not know until Tschiffely describes how he drove the horses to the river with an Indian rider, telling him to abandon them and save his life if they were swept away—I did not know until then how passionately I had followed their adventures. Tschiffely standing anxiously on the bank, guilty, wretched Tschiffely! But, swept down by the flood, the marvellous creatures gain the far bank, shake themselves and begin to nibble away as if nothing has happened. And there, after the strain, the nasty passage occurs. A fight, a man is murdered, the murderer is overpowered. He is put into jail—Tschiffely, by the way, generally put up in the local prisons, and he has copied some entertaining inscriptions from the walls—and in the middle of the night he is called in to subdue the maddened murderer who is on the point of escape.

He notes all with simple dispassionate eye: how donkeys roll on their backs to defeat—and successfully—the attacks of pumas which always bite in the neck; how ostriches stampede cattle by flapping their wings and are therefore discouraged; the iniquities of labour conditions and the orgies of pay day on the sugar plantations; and how in Mexico the famous Spanish regionalism is perpetrated in the cry "Viva la Virgen de Guadalupe! and Down with the Virgin Mary!"

All Tschiffely's detail is fascinating, his manner beautifully unaffected. V. S. PRITCHETT

AN AMERICAN RADICAL ON THE DEPRESSION

Interpretations. By WALTER LIPPMANN. *Allen and Unwin.* 10s. 6d.

Interpretations consists of selections from the articles contributed by Mr. Lippmann to the New York *Herald Tribune* from the spring of 1931 to the late autumn of 1932. They cover a wide field, ranging from the crisis in the Far East to the personality of Mr. Hoover, and from the formation of the British National Government to the affair of the Lindbergh baby. Most, however, are concerned, either directly or indirectly, with the depression, its causes, its nature, its effects upon the psychology of the American people. Mr. Lippmann deplores the deliberate insularity of America, inveighs against tariffs and trade barriers, is sceptical of dictators, seeks to strengthen the hands of the League against Japan, stresses the economic interdependence of the world. All that he writes, though at times a little dull—*Interpretations* is too exclusively occupied with the American scene to be of absorbing interest to the English reader—is eminently sane and sensible, the expression of a civilised and sensitive mind.

Mr. Lippmann is impressed by the fact that owing to the advance of science the changes in the circumstances of our lives have exceeded our capacity to adapt ourselves to them; the power which science has placed in our hands is greater than our ability to control it. In a word, man's technical knowledge has outstripped his social wisdom.

In an illuminating article on the death of Edison he points out that "the ancient wisdom of man is founded upon the conception of a life which in its fundamentals changes imperceptibly, if at all." Organised and subsidised invention has "set all the relations of men in violent motion"; "mechanised inventions have compelled men to work and think and feel in an environment vaster and more complicated than that of any previous civilisation." The problem set by these changes is the major problem of our time.

Its solution, in Mr. Lippmann's view, demands nothing less than a change in human motives, a change which will enable us to draw for the successful working of human institutions upon "energies as powerful and as persistent as the acquisitive and the competitive which are disinterested and co-operative in effect." It is because of the lack of these motives that we fail to control credit; to adjust production and consumption; to plan our cities; to make the world secure against the next war; to liquidate the effects of the last. Until the slate is wiped clean of reparations and war debts the war continues, and, while it continues, there can be no health in the world: "It may suit us to-day to swear that we shall never forgive and forget until the last red cent is paid, but these declarations for a future we shall not live to see are braggarts' boasts, mere wi and air and emptiness." Reparations have gone, but war debts remain, and so do exchange restrictions, tariff barriers, every sort of impediment to the trade of a world which, economically a single unit, is politically a congeries of States, jealous, suspicious, insular, bringing to the solution of cosmopolitan problems the mentality of the Foreign Office and the parish pump.

"There is," say the politicians in self-defence, "no known remedy for our present discontents; the experts differ; each economist has a different message." And the defence is simply not true. The economists have repeated *ad nauseam* the message which Mr. Lippmann now underlines. "Admittedly," they say, "we have no cure, no sovereign specific for the world's diseases, but we can tell you what you must do to avoid them: abolish debts, reparations, tariff barriers, exchange restrictions." So the economists. . . .

Of course, we all know that they are right, yet the politicians fail to act upon their knowledge; the people refuse to co-operate. In the Middle Ages a similar situation existed with regard to the diseases not of communities but of individuals. Hundreds of thousands died from plague, hundreds of thousands from cholera. "Admittedly," said the doctors, "we have no sovereign remedy for plague; we cannot cure cholera; but we can tell you what you must do if you wish to avoid them—keep sewage out of your water." And in the end the laymen saw the point; local authorities attended to the elementary rules of hygiene, and plague vanished from the western world. But the necessary measures required a degree of co-operation which was new in the world. They required the operation of new motives; they implied a change in human nature.

It is upon a precisely similar change that Mr. Lippmann insists, if the peoples are to co-operate in the measure required for the economic order of the future, "in which personal initiative is to be combined with public responsibility." "If," he concludes, "the descendants of the modern business man are to operate" such an order, "his motives will have to change as radically in the next centuries as they have in the past." C. E. M. JOAD

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THE CORN LAWS

The Corn Laws and Social England. By C. R. FAY. *Cambridge University Press.* 10s. 6d.

This is an interesting, irritating, conscientious and inconclusive book. Its interest lies in its subject matter; Mr. Fay must surely be right in assuming the topography of this ancient battlefield, and the strategy of the opposing forces, to be worthy the attention of a generation now conducting a struggle on the same ground, though with different weapons. It is irritating because of its scrappiness; it only too obviously consists of a string of sketchily related articles, each one excellent in itself, packed with information, heavily documented and often entertainingly written (the occasional horribly dry passages are not the author's fault) but often linked only by community of subject. There is no logical development, no "stream of tendency" to be observed. This would be more forgivable if Mr. Fay held the view that things just happen, that the policies of statesmen are the sport of circumstance, and that the historian's work is merely that of a recording annalist; but this view he explicitly denies. "I am profoundly dissatisfied," he says, at the close of Chapter VIII, "with the version of history which reduces the influence of human policy to the reactions of bedevilment or distress." It is true that this sentence follows on a condemnation of the lack of deliberate and consecutive policy during the period of which he has written; but he makes no attempt to show what such a policy or its achievements might have been.

What policy should have been followed then, and, in parallel, what policy should be followed now, are questions on which Mr. Fay's views are not easy to ascertain from this work. He has an obvious sympathy with the landed interests—a sympathy which occasionally leads him into curious lapses of logic. After summarising the great achievements of the eighteenth-century technical revolution in farming practice and its rôle in saving England from Napoleon, he comments: "That an agriculture with this to its record should have achieved national unpopularity before fifty years had elapsed is a testimony to the pace of English industrialism and the shortness of the national memory." But this sympathy does not degenerate into bias when he comes to treat of the long Corn Law controversy and the fluctuating intentions of statesmen as manifested in successive measures. From time to time one is almost tempted to wish that it did; a good healthy prejudice, however deplorable, would at least afford a guiding thread to the general reader bewildered in the maze of arguments *ad hominem* which composes Chapter II. As it is, he is likely to emerge with a rather dim idea that the bounty on the export of grain was a bad thing, and that Governor Pownall (together with many of his contemporaries) didn't know what he was talking about; both of which propositions are demonstrably sound, but hardly sufficient as a summary of the fiscal situation in the late eighteenth-century corn trade. Later arguments, even more fatuous than Pownall's, and curiously familiar in content if not in phraseology, are chronicled with only occasional comment; and if Sir Henry Parnell, of Ireland, sounds rather like Mr. Bennett, of Canada, Mr. Fay is not going to emphasise the parallel. Indeed, he conscientiously warns us against allowing ourselves to be deceived by the superficial likeness between the Corn Law period and our own. It is possible to maintain that he goes too far in this disclaimer. The contrast between the past problems of scarcity and the present problems of plenty is not as clear cut as all that; the difficulties of keeping the economic system working smoothly and responsively and at the same time of mitigating the shocks and hardships incidental to change are fundamentally the same at all times. The neo-mercantilist economies of to-day and the "planned economy" of to-morrow and the day after (in whose favour Mr. Fay pronounces rather vaguely in the last paragraphs of his penultimate chapter) must wrestle with the same problems of interconnected demand and supply, of unknown elasticities, of half-understood economic sequences, of the allocation of resources, as did the would-be directors of economic life in the days before the brief triumph of *laisser faire*. The apparatus is better, both administratively and statistically; there is a wider margin of error, and ultimate social aims have altered; but the fundamentals remain the same. Whatever more specific moral may be drawn from Mr. Fay's story of the Corn Laws, it certainly affords a wealth of instances of the too easily forgotten truth that economic control is apt almost automatically to bite off more than it can chew; together with the corollary that a partial and fluctuating economic control is worse than either *laisser faire* or complete regulation. The digression on the internal corn trade about 1800, while it seems to have been dragged into the scheme of the book by the scruff of its neck, is particularly valuable in this respect.

If Mr. Fay wants to support the case for a regulated economy, national or imperial, he has chosen a discouraging period from which to draw evidence. If, as seems more plausible from his preface, he is concerned to show that the wheat quota is an undesirable instrument for carrying out our economic purposes, he hardly carries his argument far enough. To give a lurid account of the muddle of the "Averages" and to suggest that the quota may provide the same sort of thing, is manifestly inadequate. If, on the other hand, as the whole tone of the book suggests, his purpose is merely to state the historical facts, marshal contemporary arguments on both sides, give an indication of how later economic criticism has dealt with the most important of these, and leave the reader to draw his own conclusions, then his scrappiness and lack of balance becomes more than ever a serious shortcoming. To trace the change in the terms of the rent controversy from the Corn Law reformers to Henry George is certainly interesting, but one would willingly exchange the analysis for an account of the development of the London corn market from its rudiments in 1800 to the end of the century. The story of the activities of the Anti-Corn Law League is vivid and circumstantial, but the background is vague; Mr. Fay does not succeed in placing the movement in perspective. The chapter on Huskisson and Imperial Preference is solid, clear and inevitably interesting, but it hangs in the air; the very brief survey of Anglo-Canadian trading relations during the next fifty years is too sketchy to be really illuminating. It is a pity that so good a book should, from shortcomings like these, fail to achieve the excellence of its best parts.

THE ELEPHANT AT HOME

Elephant. By COMMANDER D. E. BLUNT. *East Africa.* 12s. 6d.

Facts have at last replaced fantasy, and the legends and mythology of the elephant have been exposed for what they are. The interesting thing, moreover, is that the facts are just as exciting as the fancies. There is a fishing club on the Tweed in whose book of wagers is one concerning the period of an elephant's gestation, the disputants hazarding four and seven years respectively. The latter was, we believe, adjudged to have won, but now we know from Commander Blunt that it is from eighteen to twenty-two months. Do elephants lie down to sleep? At what age do they attain puberty? Are they myopic? What do their internal rumblings portend? These and many other questions have been answered in this admirable and entertaining book, and a hundred old fallacies have been laid to rest, let us hope beyond resurrection.

Every page gives evidence of the most careful observation, and to personal observation the author had added the testimony of his predecessors and drawn a graphic picture of the evolution of the elephant, which is scientifically accurate without being ponderous. Thus: "Having got into something like a quandary with *Tetrabelodon*, Nature had to put on her thinking cap and get the breed out of its pickle; and after what looks like a paroxysm of creative experimentation she—or Natural Selection, if that term is preferred—decided on abolishing the long lower jaw with its shovel tusks and developing the upper lip and incipient trunk into a really perfect instrument of scent and touch, with large upper tusks as weapons of offence and handy tools."

The various limbs and organs of the elephant are minutely described, together with their appropriate functions. This sounds dull, but apart from the intrinsic interest of the account, the anecdotes which emphasise the points of the narrative effectually dispel any tendency towards dullness. We learn, for instance, what the trunk does and can only marvel at the diversity of its achievements. The tail, we are told, "was considered an object of reverence by natives in Africa in the dim past": and even to-day, the author might have added, the killing of an elephant may conduce to social prestige, for in Abyssinia the wife of one who has an elephant to his credit wears a bracelet of its hairs, and this ornament gives her precedence over other women when drawing water at a well. The elephant is a gourmet, however, rather than a gourmand, as it is very particular in its food and so selective of only the best that more damage is caused to cultivation by what it treads down than by what it actually eats. Incidentally, one marauder which the author shot, when cut open exuded a strong smell of alcohol, and its stomach was found to contain nothing but millet in all stages of fermentation.

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For the sportsman the author gives the best advice concerning equipment and the vital points in the elephant, illustrated by photographs and diagrams which cannot but be helpful. But this is not the primary object of the book, and it is pleasant to read his condemnation of the modern sportsman—"the lazy, languid, lethargic lounge-lizard in motor-cars"—and to realise that the elephant has a better chance of survival than any other mammal, just because it cannot be followed in its own domain by anything on wheels. Commander Blunt is one of the pioneers in a new profession, the control of elephants, and it is that exciting and philanthropic occupation which he so happily describes. Instead of ruthless destruction, the vast herds are segregated to their own reserves and are taught by punishment, drastic, but just, to respect the cultivation of their human neighbours. The remarkable success of this experiment is a tribute to the author's endurance and humanity, and it was an occupation which of necessity brought him very near to the natives whom it was his duty to protect. How well he came to know them may be judged by the sympathy with which he writes of them. "Certain characteristics stand out in all Africans. One is their sense of humour. If, when they are intractable, appeal is made to their sense of humour, the day is usually won. They seldom bear malice. . . . They practically never give each other away. . . . People say that they have no sense of gratitude. . . . The African expresses his gratitude in deeds, not words. . . . Providing he deserves punishment, the native will not complain of its severity." Commander Blunt appears to know his African as thoroughly as his elephants. J. H. DRIBERG

HAVERS, *HIS* ENGLAND!

England, Their England. By A. G. MACDONELL. *Macmillan.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Their England, indeed, says this Scot (Scottish, or Scotch) satirist, cocking his bonnet at the innocent, half-conscious ploys of the aborigines, who may well retort that, if it be in any part still their England, it is no thanks to the long-legged gossips who, since the days that King Jamie drooled on the throne of the Tudors, have so mightily infested the country. As one who belongs to the older race whom the English dispossessed, I have no quarrel with any Scot for saucing them: the Welsh can only envy the cunning by which the Scot waited till the English, after stealing from the monks as they stole from the Britons, had made the country a soft place for the Scots to harry. Very prettily does Mr. Macdonell set out on his raid. He keeps light-tongued and light-humoured, which is the best way of satire for the light-fingered. Only once does he drop into a mood of deeper denunciation, of profound and prophetic satire. He can jest with exquisite frivolity about newspapers and their editors—there's more than a suspicion that he invaded THE NEW STATESMAN'S office and met an Irishman—about cricket, about members of parliament, about country-houses, about minor poets and The League of Nations. Not even the play-producing societies make him really serious. But when he comes to what the English have made of "gowf" (many of them cannot pronounce that euphonious monosyllable), then a deeper and more tragic note is sounded. It's not only the expense of the game—or should it be "sport?"—in these shires, it's the Lucullan surroundings, the apolaustic and appalling luxury of the snacks and the what-nots. And the conversation, a sad change after the theological back-chat of St. Andrews. It is an additional grievance, too, that the English expect one uniform accent from all Scots: O Lauder, what phonetic evils are committed in your name!

Donald, the Scot hero of this excellent satire—a book that Peacock might have written had he been a Scot, and (God forgive me for the profanity) drunk whisky instead of wine—when he goes to the Cedar Parks links, meets an old friend who is the professional there, and is puzzled at his accent, and inquires the reason for the change, his abandonment by Glennie of his own accent for broad Buchan:

> "It's good for trade," he whispered in the pure English of Inverness. "They like a Scot to be real Scottish. They think it makes a man what they call 'a character.' God knows why, but there it is. So I just humour them by talking like a Guild Street carter who's having a bit of back-chat with an Aberdeen fish-wife. It makes the profits something extraordinary."

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had their proper attention. For the first time that I can recollect here is cricket treated as the farce it is, while Mr. Macdonell does not forget that the cricketer's pads and the film-star's make-up may protect, more or less adequately, a simple human being. There is a tendency to leg-bowling—is it?—in the chapter on The League of Nations; I hope Peru is not quite so blue as Mr. Macdonell paints it. The book, for all its satire on the country of his over-drafts, is remarkably English in its atmosphere; and the English reader who grunts, grumbles and guffaws over it will no doubt complain that it is just like these Scots to break so successfully into the trade of writing English comic novels. It is now up to the other Celts to cease fouling their own nests by cascades of passionately denigratory fiction, and to begin to have a little Irish and Cymric fun at the expense of their ostensible rulers, their frequent if undelighted hosts. R. E. R.

AN EMINENT HISTORIAN

Collected Papers of T. F. Tout. Vol. I. Manchester. *The University Press.* 12*s.* 6*d.* net.

The late Professor Tout's reputation is not likely to diminish as the years go by. He had a power of organising great masses of material, a sense of the significant, an insight into the operation of institutions, which, among English historians, only Maitland has surpassed in the last half century. In his own chosen field the mantle of the great Bishop Stubbs descended worthily upon him.

It was a happy idea of the University whose contribution to historical scholarship he made so distinguished to publish his collected papers. They show a Tout who, though well-known to those who had intimate contact with him, was perhaps less obviously known to the public at large. Here are the qualities of a man with whom one might disagree, but whom it was impossible not to like. His devotion and enthusiasm are apparent on every page. He knew what a university might be; and of academic achievements in modern times the work of Tout in the Manchester History School has the kind of quality which made the Cavendish Laboratory the unique thing it is. He was not a great stylist; his interests were intense rather than wide; but the standards he applied not less to his own work than to that of others are of the kind which give to academic life its title to public regard.

The papers in this first volume largely show Tout outside his own allotted field. They are all interesting; and one or two of them are remarkable. The memorial notice of the great German scholar, Felix Lubermann, is a model of the generous courtesy to which the international obligations of scholarship should give rise. The short life of Sir A. W. Ward is quite admirable. The few brief pages on Mary Bateson recall superbly the most eminent medievalist of her sex. Indeed, it may be said that in this difficult realm where the claims of friendship and objectivity meet, Tout's success is remarkable. There is only one case in the volume where it may be said that he decided to be generous without a special effort to be just.

The later volumes in this series will largely show Tout at work in his own special field; they will contain chippings from that great workshop which ultimately produced the remarkable volumes on our early administrative history. Anyone who remembers the heavy burden of Tout's teaching, his absorption in important civic activities in Manchester, and his devotion to the development of historical studies all over Europe, cannot do other than pay a tribute of respectful admiration to the vital contribution he made to scholarship. His life was an inspiring example to every university teacher. HAROLD J. LASKI

SHORTER NOTICES

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very original writer, F. Penn-Smith, a note on Marcel Jouhandeau, a French novelist in whom Havelock-Ellis finds Spanish affinities, and an interesting article by John Sparrow on a subject which our most famous authors are always forcing us to face: Obscurity and Communication.

Conservatism in England. By F. J. C. HEARNSHAW. *Macmillan.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Professor Hearnshaw is a disaster to Conservatism which has its own philosophy and which has had great advocates. An intelligent restatement of the case for Conservatism is badly needed. Instead of that, Professor Hearnshaw has produced a hotch-potch of history and prejudice, the arrogance, ignorance and violence of which are almost incredible in a professor of London University. The temper and quality of his work may be illustrated by his comment on the defeat of the General Strike: "Naughty children who snatch are properly punished by deprivation." If revolution comes in this country it will be provoked by people like Professor Hearnshaw.

A Short History of the British Working Class Movement, 1789-1927. By G. D. H. COLE. Complete in one volume with a New Foreword. *Allen and Unwin.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

There is no substitute for Mr. Cole's three short volumes on British working-class history. The three volumes are now compactly and cheaply bound together with a very illuminating Foreword, in which Mr. Cole discusses the crisis of 1931 and the present prospects of the Labour Party and the Trade Union movement.

The Interdependent World and Its Problems. By RAMSAY MUIR. *Constable.* 5*s.*

This small book, based on a course of lectures delivered recently by Professor Muir in Leeds and Liverpool, is an attempt in very general terms to outline the political and economic problems which arise out of the close interdependence of the whole world under modern conditions of transport and production. But Professor Muir is far more at home when he is writing of political than of economic questions, and he makes in regard to both certain fundamental assumptions which govern his entire argument. He dismisses, for example, almost without discussion, the entire controversy between Capitalism and Socialism, on the ground that there is really no such thing as the capitalist system and therefore no real conflict between the two; and after this summary dismissal of the outstanding controversy of the day, he proceeds to discuss the solution of the world's problems on the assumption that they can be solved without fundamental changes in the economic order. On this basis he puts his faith in the development of the League of Nations, while admitting the meagreness of its achievement up to the present time. He rejects as visionary the cosmopolitan attitude that looks forward to a world State; and, while he recognises the dangers of nationalism both as a cause of war and as a force breaking up the world into far too large a number of separate economic units, he regards nationalism as by far the strongest motive power in the modern world, and as the necessary basis of any possible new world order. Within this assumption he pleads for a limitation of absolute national sovereignty and for progressive disarmament based largely on mutual security pacts among groups of nations as well as on the extension of the general authority of the League and the Paris Pact. In the economic field he insists on the need for a drastic scaling down of tariffs and the restoration of an international currency standard without giving any very clear idea how these results are to be brought about. On economic questions especially, his conclusions are hesitant and appear far too much to ignore the underlying reasons for the present disequilibrium and to aim at the removal of consequences without any real attempt to get down to causes.

Great Britain and the Law of Nations. Edited by H. A. SMITH. Vol. I. *King.* 16*s.*

It was a good idea of Professor Smith to seek to dig out from British archives material which should illustrate the British attitude to issues in international law. But if this work is to be done with any adequacy its success depends, as the great contribution of Professor Basset Moore made evident, on the fulness of the materials, on the one side, and the completeness of the historical setting on the other. Professor Smith's work does not meet either of these tests. It is a useful selection, though one cannot judge how far it is definitively representative. It will be useful until the British Government supersedes it by doing for this country what Professor Moore did for the diplomacy of the United States.

Man's Adaptation of Nature: Studies of the Cultural Landscape. By P. W. BRYAN. *University of London.* 16*s.*

As historians harp on the moulding of man and his cultures by the natural environment so Dr. Bryan as a geographer harps on the moulding of the natural environment by man. Consequently, in the present book we are mainly concerned with the man-made world, and our maps deal primarily with man's work, workshops, habitations and recreations as they affect the landscape. Dr. Bryan in a series of arresting chapters discusses this cultural landscape, seen as farms and villages, pasture and ploughed land, and orchard; as great manufacturing towns, or seaports with concentrated populations; as mines with their more scattered communities, and as great water-power stations, aerodromes, etc. Very interesting is Dr. Bryan's discussion of shelter, in which he demonstrates the house-patterns that may be discerned in areas dominated by specific occupations, and takes the village of Helidon in Northamptonshire as an example of the adaptation of its environment by a village community. In this general survey all man's activities, vocational, reactional and aesthetic, are taken into consideration, with the view to the formulation of a scheme for geographical study, that shall survey the earth as a whole, natural and man-made; with the hope that this study may lead to world-planning on a scientific basis. The book is admirably and very fully illustrated.

Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry. By DOUGLAS BUSH. *University of Minnesota Press. London: Humphrey Milford.* 24*s.*

Here is as elegant and witty a piece of scholarship as the lover of literature could desire. Not only has Professor Bush given us a brilliant appreciation of Christendom's half-delighted, half-frightened incorporation of the Greek mythology into its secular and religious poetry and of the strange and lovely tapestries that arose from the incongruous mingling of Pauline puritanism and Pagan sensuousness, Gothic diffuseness and Classic clarity; he has also given us a scholarly survey of the sources from which the men of the Middle Ages garnered the myths and of the symbolic and allegorical treatment to which they subjected them. In this connection one uses the term Middle Ages advisedly, for Professor Bush sees Renaissance poetry not as a Classic revival, but as the fine flower of mediaeval thought, and very early he makes the point that the essential quality of Renaissance poetry at the best as at the worst is its mediaevalism. Brilliant throughout, this survey of English poetry from Chaucer to the Restoration reaches its peak in the chapter devoted to Milton, in which, illustrated by the aptest quotation, Milton's changing attitude to the myths he came to contemn but could never forbear to use is traced through all the periods of his creative life.

About Motoring

LAZIER AND LAZIER

THE lubrication of motor cars has undergone many changes since the first Daimlers and Panhards with snub, coal-scuttle bonnets annoyed and shocked horse-owners. A large glass flask on the dash, permitting its dwindling content of oil to be visible; a long battery of little tubes with brass taps, each tap controlling a drip of oil; even a can of grease, a large hole with a lid, and a wooden paddle for shifting the grease—all these figured as lubricating devices on the more primitive and prehistoric car. Then came a day when the engine, gear box, steering gear and back axle were satisfied with substantial replenishments at long intervals; but the soul of the owner was tortured by an immense number of small brass screwed caps, threaded on to such petty bearings as spring shackles and the like. A chassis might boast upwards of forty such grease cups—many a man sold a car after two or three years without ever tracing them all to their lairs. Nor did his failure particularly matter, as it was nearly impossible to stuff them full of grease. Should an exceptionally resolute and deft owner fill all his cups, most of the grease would squeeze on to the outside of the car when he replaced the cups; and if some of the grease eventually entered the bearing, its amount was ridiculously inadequate, and the bearing wore almost as fast as an ungreased bearing. Wise owners gradually realised the futility of the entire proceedings; decided that a task which is filthy, futile and backaching, ought not to be tackled by sane beings; and permitted their cars to become dry and rattlesome.

Then an ingenious person invented the grease-gun and nipple system, fathered chiefly in these islands under the trade name of Tecalemit. On paper this was a magnificent solution. Your car exhibited a number of nipples; if it was a good car, the less accessible nipples were connected by metal tubing to some handy bracket near the edge of the car, lest you should crick your august spine or soil your superb clothes; the nipples were unprotected by any screwed cap; all you had to do was to lounge quietly round the car, and whenever you saw a nipple, press upon it the muzzle of a weapon resembling a Chicago gangster's automatic with silencer. This gun was so cunningly constructed that the mere lounging of your weight upon its butt propelled a stream of grease to the most distant marrow of the car with a force of 500 lb. per sq. in. or more. Such was the theory; but in practice the gun often proved to be empty of grease, and refilling it was a tiresome business, passing the wit of many. And if the gun was full, sundry of the nipples would prove to be choked by a minute spicule of road dust, so that the butt of the gun ceased to yield, even when a Carnera leant his weight upon it. So the inventors

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CLAIMS PAID during year in the Life Branches—£1,984,079,
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Chairman and General Manager.

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Chief Office: Oxford Street, Manchester, 1.

(Incorporated in England 1864.)

Summary of Directors' Report for the year ended 31st December, 1932.

Total Income for year £11,746,148, being an increase of **£243,338** over the previous year.

Total Assets at end of the year, **£55,753,115,** being an increase of **£3,034,108** during the year.

Total Claims Paid in the year, **£5,374,670.** The Company has paid **£76,321,508** in claims since its establishment.

The Total Assurances existing on December 31st, 1932, amounted to **£70,025,082** in the Ordinary Branch and **£98,854,377** in the Industrial Branch.

Reversionary Bonus of £1 - 18 - 0 per cent. declared on all Ordinary Branch participating Policies,— an increase of 4s. per cent. as compared with 1931.

Industrial Branch: £133,933 Profits allocated to certain classes of Policyholders.

The Premium Income in the Ordinary Branch was **£4,223,042,** being an increase of **£83,983** over the previous year; and in the Industrial Branch it was **£5,168,826,** being an increase of **£84,333.**

J. WILCOCK HOLGATE, *Chairman.*

once more became busy. They connected all the bearings together with thin pipes, hitched to a dripping well or a miniature trench mortar on the dash. So long as there was grease in the mortar or oil in the dripping well the car would be lubricated. But we owners soon develop cynicism. We began to ask awkward questions. We enquired what happened if one of the thread-like tubes leading to some distant and vital bearing snapped off, or became choked. The answer to the first question was that the bearing seized ; and to the second, that we put on our oldest clothes, and tried to clear the jam. So we remained unappeased. And at last the Tecalemit people engaged a professor of psychology, and discovered the one and only correct solution. "My dear directors," he remarked (of course, in more reverent and commercial language than this scribe can reproduce), "You are shinning up the wrong tree. These motorists are fundamentally idle people. They will never trouble themselves to operate any lubricating system which demands one erg of energy or one dwt. of brains. Moreover, they are habitual grumblers, and they will continue to abuse and denounce your best efforts. You must undertake the lubrication for them ; and then at last you will know peace." The directors demurred. "This will cost money," they said. "Quite so," replied the professor, "but most motor cars are owned by men, and any man will empty his trouser pockets of small change to save himself exertion." So the Tecalemit people organised lubrication service stations, where your car was miraculously whisked up on giant jacks, and mighty grease guns, driven by electric power, propelled long yellow serpentine threads of grease through the most tortuous and distant interstices of the chassis. Moreover, the cost did not compel the serviced owner to get out his note wallet, but merely to dive into his right-hand trouser pocket for a few bronze and nickel coins. Male motorists thus attained nirvana, so far as remote bearings of the chassis were concerned ; if their thriftier wives and sisters and daughters and aunts continued to grumble, and to wrestle with choked nipples and empty guns, well, is it not the province of woman to suffer and to grumble ?

And now the Wakefield people have emerged into the open with a vast extension of the same principle. In part it is an act of penitence on their part. For some years past Lord Wakefield and his henchmen have pestered us by inventing new oils and educating us in their use. They have compelled our reluctant brains to grasp the fact that the ideal lubricant for a back axle may be as ill-suited to a magneto as Napoleon brandy is to a coal-heaver. They have indeed hammered into our obtuse brains the fact that a small, cheap mass-production motor car considers EIGHT separate lubricants vital to its mechanical welfare. This is a frightful truth. It compelled us to buy and store in our garages eight separate gallipots, none of them very cheap, and all of them—within five minutes of their opening—inconceivably greasy. Over and above the filthy contortions involved by these gallipots there was the mental strain of remembering which gallipot suited which bearing ; and also the frequency of the doses, for a shacklepin loves its daily dose, whereas a back axle merely nullifies your brake power if you grease it too freely or too often. Some honourable amend was clearly due from Lord Wakefield to us perplexed and bothered motorists. And this week he has made it. He offers each of us a little book, resembling those wee volumes of devotion which Catholic ladies hug in Lent. You take it to your garage—assuming that your garage is one of the 1,000 new Castrol Lubrequipment stations. A smart mechanic seizes it, studies it, applies one or other of his giant million h.p. guns to the correct nipples, salutes, accepts your small change ; and you take the road again with your car running as on oiled silk. Next night you store the car in another Lubrequipment garage while you dine at the Hotel Splendide. The mechanic demands your Castrol log, and if any bearing is due thereby for its next dose, he attends to the matter. Your hands remain clean. Your clothes remain unsullied. Your car profits by what may be compared with a Harley Street regimen. You no longer try to pack foul grease into reluctant guns, or to clear invisible holes in microscopic nipples, or to stand on your head in the region of the clutch withdrawal thrust race. The sole debit is a steady diminution of the small change in your right-hand trouser pocket ; and you regain this by the sustained life and silkiness of your motor car, and by a marked reduction in the charges of your valet service depot for renewing frayed linings in the aforesaid pocket. If Lord Wakefield is a baron he deserves now to be made a viscount ; or should it be vice versa ? My politics prevent my being very trustworthy about details of precedence in the peerage.

R. E. DAVIDSON

Playtime

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 11.—SAVINGS

"We shall soon have a lot in our savings bank," said Henry.

"Yes," said Dorothy. "At the beginning of each year, Mummy invests for me that number of shillings which is the cube of the number of years old that I was last birthday."

"She does the same for me," said Margery.

"And Daddy," said Henry, "does the same for Peter and for me."

"Of course," said Margery, "Dorothy gets a lot more than I do. She's five years older."

"Well, Peter's five years older than me," said Henry.

"I wonder," said Dorothy, "how much more Daddy pays out than Mummy ?"

"Well," said Peter, "the difference gets greater every year. I heard Daddy telling Mummy that this year the excess of his payments over hers was £22 10s. greater than last year."

Find the age, last birthday, of each of the four children.

PROBLEM 9.—ELSINORE

Hamlet won	20 *ducats when*	*Laertes*	*was President.*
„ „	5 „ „	*Marcellus*	„ „
„	*neither won nor lost when*	*Bernardo*	„ „
„	*lost* 10 *ducats*	„ *Horatio*	„ „
„ „	15 „	„ *Osric*	„ „

The six relevant distributions of points, and the monetary allocation corresponding to each, are evidently as follows :

	Distribution	Wins and Losses					Total Pool
A	5 4 3 2 1	+10	+5	—	−5	−10	15 ducats
B	5 4 3 3 0	+10	+5	—	—	−15	15 „
C	6 4 3 2 0	+15	+5	—	−5	−15	20 „
D	5 5 3 2 0	+10	+10	—	−5	−15	20 „
E	5 4 4 2 0	+10	+5	+5	−5	−15	20 „
F	7 4 3 1 0	+20	+5	—	−10	−15	25 „

(Pool F must be selected from the three possible 25 ducat pools because no other involves a 20 ducat win.)

These pools must now be fitted into a "competition table."

	President	Bernardo	Hamlet	Horatio	Laertes	Marcellus	Osric
D	Bernardo ...	—	0	−15	+10	+10	−5
C	Hamlet	0	—	+5	+15	−5	−15
A	Horatio	+5	−10	—	−5	0	+10
F	Laertes	−15	+20	+5	—	−10	0
B	Marcellus ...	0	+5	0	−15	—	+10
E	Osric	+10	−15	+5	−5	+5	—

The data furnish a series of inferences to enable this to be done.

I have to thank a number of solvers for appreciative comments on this problem.

PROBLEM 8.—MURDER ON THE UNDERGROUND

A set of Low's cartoons is awarded to : R. H. Fish, 12 Westbury Road, Brentwood, Essex.

There were 85 correct and 38 incorrect solutions. In response to enquiries, the analysis of these latter is as follows :

15	solvers found	Buffo	guilty.
12	„	Zambaglione	„
7	„	Spaghetti	„
4	„	sent in various other solutions.	

On the cumulative point basis, six points are awarded for this problem.

PRIZES FOR PROBLEM-SOLVERS

One set of Low's cartoons is awarded weekly to the sender of a correct solution selected at random.

In addition a record is kept of the names of senders of all correct solutions submitted. All solvers qualify for book prizes on a cumulative-point basis. For particulars see THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION of December 24th.

Solutions to the current problem must be addressed to CALIBAN, c/o THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, 10 Gt. Queen Street, London, W.C.2, and must reach this office not later than the next Tuesday but one after the date of publication.

CALIBAN

Among the contributors to the

SPRING BOOKS NUMBER

of the

New Statesman & Nation

next week will be

Richard Church
Walter De La Mare
Cecil Gray
Laurence Housman
Richard Hughes
Constant Lambert
Raymond Mortimer
William Plomer
Peter Quennell
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Bertrand Russell
Siegfried Sassoon
G. W. Stonier
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and

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HALIFAX

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RECORD INCREASE OF BUSINESS. **TOTAL ASSETS EXCEED £88,000,000**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS to be presented to the Shareholders at the Annual General Meeting of the Society, to be held at Halifax, on Monday, the 27th March, 1933.

The Directors have great pleasure in submitting to the Members the Annual Statement of Accounts, showing the operations of the Society during the 80th financial year ended the 31st January, 1933.

They are glad to be able to report that the business of the Society in all departments for the past year has been eminently satisfactory. Notwithstanding the unfavourable financial and industrial conditions which have prevailed during the period under review, there have been new record increases in the Total Assets, Invested Funds, and the total number of Shareholders' and Depositors' Accounts.

The following statement of the business at the end of the year, compared with the corresponding figures for the year ended 31st January, 1928, is a striking indication of the enormous expansion of the business of the Society during the last five years, viz.,

	Number of Open Accounts.	Invested Funds.	Assets.	Reserve Funds.
Jan. 31st, 1933 ...	**530,476**	**£85,661,300**	**£88,676,292**	**£3,014,991**
Jan. 31st, 1928 ...	**329,224**	**£45,520,281**	**£46,981,482**	**£1,461,200**
Increase in 5 years	**£201,252**	**£40,141,019**	**£41,694,810**	**£1,553,791**

ASSETS. The Total Assets at the end of the year amounted to £88,676,292, being a record increase of £10,725,939.

RESERVE FUNDS. The reserve Funds, after providing for all interest and bonus allotted up to the date of the account, stand at £3,014,991.

INCOME. The income for the year, exclusive of investments realised, was £37,885,954, an increase of £4,426,084.

MORTGAGES. The demand for loans upon mortgage of property during the year was exceedingly satisfactory, and the total amount advanced was £16,618,117. The number of new borrowers was 31,044, compared with 30,383 in the previous year, and the average amount advanced on each mortgage was £535. The total amount owing upon mortgage at the end of the year was £64,606,428, an increase of £4,830,765, during the year, and the total number of borrowers was 166,459, or 14,424 more than the previous year. Of this number no less than 77 per cent. are in respect of mortgages where the debt does not exceed £500, and the average amount owing on all the Society's mortgages is only £388 each.

SHARE AND DEPOSIT FUNDS. The amount standing to the credit of Investing Shareholders and Depositors was £85,661,300, being a record increase of £10,524,089 during the year.

PROFITS. The net profit of the year, after payment of all expenses and income tax, and after providing for all interest due to Depositors and Shareholders, up to the date of the account was £410,146.

The Directors recommend that there shall be distributed in addition to the interest of £3 10s. 0d. per cent., a bonus of £1 0s. 0d. per cent. upon the sum standing to the credit of Paid-up Shareholders, Class 1; and in addition to the interest of £3 10s. 0d. per cent. a bonus of £1 0s. 0d. per cent. to the Subscription Investing Shareholders upon the total amount paid by them up to the end of the preceding year.

As indicated in the Report of the Directors last year, it has been necessary to provide the sum of £444,268, as compared with £250,312, to free the Members of the Society from liability for Income Tax upon interest credited, and this large increase has affected the balance of profit available for distribution as bonuses to Investing Shareholders.

ACCOUNTS. The number of new Shareholders' and Depositors' Accounts opened during the year was 110,275, and the total number of open accounts in all departments at the end of the year was 530,476, making an unprecedented increase of 53,872 accounts.

The Society has further strengthened its distinguished position as by far the largest Building Society in the world, and its Assets now amount to more than one-sixth of the total assets of the whole of the Building Societies in the Kingdom.

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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By TOREADOR

SOCIALISM AT THE WHITE HOUSE—CURRENCIES AND THE PRICE OF GOLD—UNDERGROUND AND "MET."

PARTS of Mr. Roosevelt's impressive Inaugural speech read like an election address of Mr. E. F. Wise. Consider the following: "The practices of unscrupulous money changers stand indicted in the court of public opinion . . . We require two safeguards against a return of the evils of the old order. There must be strict supervision of all banking and credit investments. There must be an end to speculation with other people's money. There must be provision for an adequate but sound currency." Such phrases will be on the lips of every Socialist candidate at the next election when he seeks to win popular support for the nationalisation of the joint stock banks and the formation of a National Investment Board. That they should be heard in the Inaugural speech of a President of the greatest capitalist country in the world is remarkable evidence of the present temper of the American people. Mr. Roosevelt is an orator who feels the mood of his audience. To-day the American public is hating its bankers as the Nazis in Germany hate their Jews. The distrust of the banks, I may recall, began to reach panic intensity when the names of the banks which had had to receive help from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation were made public by the authority of Congress about a month ago. Mr. Henry Ford, who still has a warm place in the hearts of the American public, turned this distrust to active dislike when he attributed the strike at the Briggs body-building works which held up the Ford factories, to a "bankers' ramp." Finally, in this electric atmosphere, Congress chose to expose to public obloquy Mr. Mitchell, the Chairman of the National City Bank, and Mr. H. B. Baker, President of the National City Company, the two most prominent bankers in New York. This no doubt accounts for the "Socialism" which has taken hold of the White House. Mr. Roosevelt fully intends, if I am not mistaken, to have Federal Government supervision of the banking system as well as of the railways and the utilities.

* * *

The American banking crisis developed at such an amazing speed that Mr. Roosevelt's proclamation took London almost by surprise. Banking moratoria which up to February 25th were confined to Michigan and Maryland became general throughout the remaining forty-six States of the Union in the seven days ended March 4th. The "bank holiday" declared by the State of New York on Saturday last made the national moratorium inevitable. In the week ended March 1st a total of $962 millions in currency was withdrawn from 450 member banks of the Federal Reserve system. This must be the record "run on banks" of our time, unless the French are to beat it. How the banks are to be reopened will be known by the day these lines are printed, but whether recovery can come without positive inflation of the currency may not be apparent for some time. If gold exports are to be prohibited for a further period and free dealings are to be allowed in the dollar, there may be a temporary panic in which the dollar may fall to a rate over 4.00 to the £. But this cannot last unless there is to be uncontrollable inflation. The repatriation of American balances and the speculative purchases of American "equity" shares by foreigners, not to mention the balance of payments in favour of a creditor country, will force the dollar-sterling rate back to near its pre-crisis level. All this is assuming that free dealings are allowed to reopen in an inconvertible dollar, which is by no means certain. Indeed, the general opinion as I write is that America will not abandon the gold standard but will peg the dollar exchange rates as long as the embargo on gold exports lasts. As far as the European gold currencies are concerned, the outlook is less certain than for the dollar.

* * *

The present policy of the British Government in pegging the sterling-franc rate is not one which ought to be continued. If this country is eventually to stabilise on a gold basis, it would seem wiser tactics to maintain a free market for gold in London and fix a price for gold from day to day at which the Bank of England will buy. If the sterling price of gold is raised the franc-exchange will have to adjust itself until the point is reached when France can no longer maintain her position and will have to prohibit the export of gold. As soon as France is off the gold standard, the rest will follow. Great Britain will then be the sole country with a free gold market—and at last she will be able to invite the world back to a gold standard at new parities which will enable equilibrium to be maintained in the future. This may sound like the dream of the gold producer who is longing to see a higher price for his gold, but it may be the solution of the world financial crisis. Personally I shall regret it because I believe in a managed currency without gold as the base, but it is certainly impressive to see faith in the yellow metal still growing while confidence in currencies is declining.

* * *

The holder of gold mining shares has nothing, therefore, to fear for the moment. The scramble for gold goes on and, as we have seen last Saturday, when Central Banks become threatened Governments quickly suspend the export of gold from their countries. It is possible that when the whole of Europe is off the gold standard the hoarders' demand for bar gold in the London market will force the price of the metal up to a fantastic height. Yet for a panicky moment this week some investors imagined that there would be no market or price for gold. The momentary slump and subsequent recovery in the leading gold shares are shown in the following table:

	Highest Price, 1933.	Price, Mar. 6th.	Price, Mar. 9th.	1932 Divs. %	1933 Est. Earnings %*
Crowns, 10/- ..	8⅛	7 7/16	7 9/16	77½	193
Sub Nigel, 10/- ..	7½	6 13/16	7⅛	80	120
Geduld, £1 ..	5⅝	5	5¼	37½	66
Randfontein, £1 ..	53/-	45/6	48/9	8⅓	32½
Nourse, £1 ..	2 7/16	33/1½	38/3	7½	37
Langlaagte, £1 ..	35/6	25/-	28/9	20	36

* Estimated profit with gold at 115/- per oz., after deducting one-third of net profits for taxes and other expenses.

For the time being, the sentiment in the Kaffir market will be decided largely by the sterling-franc exchange. As the franc depreciates in terms of sterling the sterling price of gold is automatically lowered—and *vice versa* (a mistaken policy, as I have said, for the price of gold should move the franc rate, not the franc rate the price of gold). If the dollar moves off gold, the sterling price of gold will still be determined by the sterling-franc rate, as long as France remains on the gold standard. If both America and France suspend the gold standard, the sterling price of gold will be governed by the dealings in the London market, and in effect it will be dictated by the British Government. Devaluation of the gold dollar or franc does not affect the question.

* * *

Now that the London Passenger Transport Bill has passed its second reading in the House of Lords without a division the ordinary stockholders of the Metropolitan Railways are within sight of "cashing in" on their "nuisance" value. The opposition of their directors to the Bill was silenced with the promise of a valuable option to the ordinary stockholders. The ordinary stock only earned 1.4 per cent. last year, 2.5 per cent. in 1931 and 3½ per cent. in 1930. Yet holders may elect under the Bill to take for a period "trust" stock guaranteed up to 3¼ per cent. for fifteen years and 3 per cent. for ten years, which is to be charged ultimately on the pooled suburban traffics of the four main line groups. Thus, the worst "equity" in the London passenger transport world comes off best under the Bill. Metropolitan Railway ordinary is quoted at 67 to yield £4 17s. per cent. if the stock is exchanged for the "trust" 3¼ per cent. stock. Lord Ashfield in his speech to the Underground shareholders was as cheerful as he could be but it is not pleasant for them to feel that in their case there is an option against them. After five years, if payment of interest at the standard rates is in default, i.e., if the revenues of the London Passenger Transport Board fall more than 4.9 per cent. below the estimates computed by Sir William McLintock (based on the average results for the three years 1928–30) a petition of 5 per cent. of any class of stockholders may involve the Board in a receivership. The net income of the "common fund" of the Underground group of companies in 1932 was 5.4 per cent. below the 1929–30 average while L.C.C. tramway receipts have been running about 3 per cent. below the 1931–32 level. If Transport Board "C" stock pays 4½ per cent. for the first year it will be fortunate. At 17s. 7d. Underground shares might be exchanged for Metropolitan Railway ordinary stock, if greater security is desired.

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DUCHESS. Children in Uniform. Wed., Sat.

HIPPODROME. The One Girl. Wed., Th., S.

QUEEN'S. Once in a Lifetime. Wed., Sat.

ST. MARTIN'S. The Green Bay Tree. Tu. W.F.

SAVOY. Jolly Roger. Wed. & Sat.

WESTMINSTER. The Lake. Sat.

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